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THE

WHOLE WORKS

OF THE REVEREND AND LEARNED

MR JOHN WILLISON,

LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT DUNDEE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

CONTAINING

I. THE AFFLICTED MAN'S COMPANION.

II. THE CHURCH'S DANGER, AND THE MINISTER'S DUTY: A SERMON.

III. A SACRAMENTAL DIRECTORY: OR, A TREATISE CONCERNING THE SANCTIFICATION OF A COMMUNION SABBATH.

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For J. DICKSON, J. OGLE, J. FAIRBAIRN, J. GUTHRIE, *and* S. CHEYNE, *Edinburgh*: G. PEATTIE, *Leith*:—M. OGLE, *and* J. IMRAY, *Glasgow*:—G. MILNE, *Dundee*:—A. BROWN, *Aberdeen*:—*and* J. FORSYTH, *Elgin*.

1798.

LEMOYNE
NEW YORK

TO THE READER.

THE ſubject of this book, however melancholy it may appear to ſome, yet it is neceſſary to all; ſeeing the word of God, and our own experience, do aſſure us, that "Man, who is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble;" and that he "is born to troubles, as the ſparks fly upwards." Nay, God's deareſt children are not exempted from this common fate. We ſee what is the character God giveth of his church, Iſa. liv. 11. "O thou afflicted, and toſſed with tempeſts, and not comforted."

If in this world, then, we muſt look for tribulation, it is highly neceſſary for every man to ſeek direction how to provide for it, and behave under it, ſo as he may glorify God, edify others, and attain to eternal happineſs at laſt. The tribulations we have to look for here are manifold; but, among thoſe that are outward, I know none about which men ought to be more thoughtful and concerned, than bodily ſickneſs, that uſual harbinger of death, and which uſhers the way to judgment.

This is a ſubject not much handled in public ſermons, which are delivered only to them that are in health, the ſick being incapable to attend them. Wherefore, it ſeems the more neceſſary to handle it in writing, that ſo the afflicted may have a book in their houſes, and at their bed-ſides, as a monitor to preach to them in private, when they are reſtrained from hearing ſermons in public.

And though ſometimes miniſters ſermons may be very ſuitable to the caſe of the ſick and afflicted; yet, alas! the moſt part are careleſs and forgetful hearers of theſe things, while they are in health and proſperity, as reckoning the evil day at ſome diſtance from them. A book, then, ſuch as the following Directory, being with them in time of ſickneſs and affliction, may, by the divine bleſſing, be uſeful to bring to their remem-

brance thoſe counſels and admonitions which they very much neglected in the time of their health.

Again, miniſters of the goſpel, though never ſo much inclined to attend the ſick, yet, by reaſon of diſability and multiplicity of other work, cannot be always with them, to direct, reſolve, and comfort them. But ſuch a book as this, they may have ſtill at hand to conſult with.

And, in regard the afflicted for the moſt part are out of caſe to read for themſelves, it would be a moſt charitable work for friends or neighbours that attend them, to lay hold on proper ſeaſons for reading ſuch a book as this in their hearing; and eſpecially ſuch chapters or directions as they judge moſt ſuitable for them. Thus you might be helped in ſome meaſure to exoner your conſciences, and do your laſt offices of kindneſs to your ſick and dying friends, when you can ſerve them no longer in this world.

I might have brought in and handled ſome controverſies (had I been fond of them) in the enſuing treatiſe, about the adminiſtration of the Lord's ſupper to the ſick, and about extreme unction, which ſome alſo begin to plead for, and thence have taken occaſion to touch at ſome other new uſages, ſuch as the middle ſtate, prayers for the dead, and other Popiſh errors, that ſome (called Proteſtants) would have revived and introduced among us. But I have induſtriouſly ſhunned what is controverſial, and kept cloſe to what is practical and owned by all true Chriſtians.

For preventing the growth of theſe and other errors, (from which this nation hath been much longer free than others) I wiſh all ranks among us would cloſely obſerve the ſacred rule of faith, God's word, and remember the ſolemn and national engagements we of this land are under, to maintain the pure truths of God therein contained, in oppoſition to all ſorts of errors, whether Popiſh, Pelagian, Arian, Antinomian, &c. And, may we ever abhor the doctrine that would teach us to break theſe bands aſunder!

Have we not ground this day to ſuſpect that Satan is carrying on a deep and ſubtle plot for ſhaking our covenanted

covenanted Reformation, and weakening a Proteſtant intereſt? When, upon the one hand, ſome are beginning openly to advance and propagate the old abjured Popiſh doctrines which our reformers did throw out, and with axes and hammers would go at once to cut down all our carved work; and, at the ſame time, on the other hand, ſome would be at breaking down the excellent fences of our Reformation, viz. our covenants, confeſſions, the magiſtrate's power, &c. For this end, papers are ſpread, and poſitions advanced, impugning the warrantableneſs of our national covenants and confeſſions, and the obligation thereof; reflecting alſo upon our worthy Reformers and anceſtors, as unenlightened, who framed and took them, or died adhering thereunto; and alſo denying the magiſtrate's power, CIRCA SACRA (for the ſupport of the truth, and ſuppreſſing of hereſies) acknowledged by the word of God and our confeſſion of faith; and all this, forſooth, to make way for a toleration of all errors and ſects among us; though they cannot but know, that tolerating of falſe religions is expreſsly ranked among the ſins forbidden in the ſecond commandment, according to the expoſition of our larger catechiſm; and is alſo condemned by the twenty-third chapter of our confeſſion: in both which we may ſee the clear ſcripture-texts, cited by the Aſſembly, for refuting and condemning any ſuch toleration. Ah! what joy may all this cauſe at Rome! therefore tell it not in Gath, &c.

As the Lord did ſignally countenance our Reformers practice in entering into ſolemn and national covenants with God, and among themſelves, for religion and reformation, by the pouring out of his Spirit from on high, for bringing in of many ſouls to himſelf, and for overturning idolatry and ſuperſtition, and advancing reformation to a great pitch, in ſpite of all the enemies and difficulties that were in the way; ſo their practice of national covenanting, even under the New Teſtament diſpenſation, is ſufficiently warranted both by the light of nature, and by the word of God, and that in both Teſtaments. And this will appear if we conſider the ſcripture-precedents, together with the promiſes

and

and prophecies of the Old Teſtament relating to goſpel times, and compare them with the New; and eſpecially thoſe which foretel the unchurching of the Jewiſh nation, and the ingrafting of the Gentile nations into their room: and that thereupon the national church-ſtate and privileges of the Jews were to be transferred to Chriſtian nations, and particularly this of being nationally in covenant with God. Which prophecies are to have their ſpecial and full accompliſhment at Babylon's downfal. For illuſtrating theſe points, and applying the ſcripture-texts relative thereto, I might expatiate in ſeveral ſheets of paper, if it were proper here. I ſhall only at this time cite ſome of the texts that may be well improven to the foreſaid purpoſes; which the reader may turn to and conſider at his leiſure, ſuch as Iſa. xix. 18, 21, 23, 24, 25. chap. xlv. 23. Jer. l. 4, 5. the lx. lxi. and lxii. chapters of Iſaiah throughout. Iſa. lv. 3, 4, 5. Micah iv. 1, 2. Zech. viii. 21, 22, 23. Rev. ii. 15. Rom. xi. 17, 19. chap. x. 12, 19. Mat. iii. 5, 6. Acts viii. 6, 12. 2 Cor. viii. 5. Mat. xxi. 43. Rom. ix. 24, 25, 26. compared with Hoſ. i. 9, 10, 11. chap. ii. 23. Likewiſe I might cite ſeveral prophecies with reſpect to the iſlands, and utmoſt ends of the earth, which were peopled by Japhet, that have a very particular and favourable aſpect to this covenanted land.

Beſides all which, it is evident, from the firſt and great command of the law, which is directed to Iſrael as a nation, and is obligatory under the New Teſtament as well as the Old; that it is a moral duty, univerſally and perpetually binding upon nations and ſocieties, as well as ſingle perſons, to chuſe, acknowledge, and avouch the Lord to be their God, to walk in his ways, and keep his ſtatutes. This is required in the firſt commandment according to the expoſition of our Larger Catechiſm; and is there confirmed by theſe texts, that warrant and exemplify the practice of national covenanting, ſuch as Deut. xxvi. 19, 17. Joſh. xxiv. 22. In ſuch a national way did our fathers of old acknowledge and avouch the Lord to be their God, and devote themſelves and their poſterity to the Lord. And, bleſſed be the Lord our God, who did many ways declare himſelf to be well

pleaſed

pleaſed with the bargain, and eſpecially by filling the temple with his glory.

As the prophets and godly Jews were at great pains to convey to poſterity hiſtorical accounts of the wonderful deliverances God wrought for Iſrael at the Red-ſea, and in reſcuing them from Egypt, Babylon, and other enemies; ſo it would be uſeful to fortify our reformation, if we were careful to hand down to the riſing generation a ſenſe of God's diſtinguiſhing mercy to this land, in delivering us from ſpiritual Babylon, and reſcuing us from time to time from theſe captains that have fought to lead us back thither. Many a time hath he delivered us, when we have been brought very low.

By many inſtances it hath appeared, that the glorious JEHOVAH hath not been aſhamed to own his covenant relation to this ſinful and unworthy land. God forbid that we of this age ſhould be aſhamed to own our covenant-relation to him. This hath been both our glory and our ſafety; and I hope, there will ſtill be found a remnant to own it, and plead it with God in the time of danger. Surely, it is not time now to diſclaim it, when the enemies of our Zion are combining together, and ſeeking to raze her to the foundation. Let all her lovers cry mightily to her covenanted Lord in her behalf, in theſe ſhaking times: let them join to put up that prayer of the Pſalmiſt, lxxviii. 28. "Strengthen, O God, that which thou haſt wrought for us;" and that of Habakkuk, Hab. iii. 2. "O Lord, revive thy work in the midſt of the years."

MAY 27. 1797.

N. B. The foreſaid digreſſion, in the preface to the firſt edition, was occaſioned by the broaching of ſome Sectarian notions, which introduced great reelings and ſhakings in this corner, and other parts of this church; ſince which time, alas! ſhe hath enjoyed little peace within her walls, or proſperity within her palaces; but, inſtead thereof, ſhe hath been toſſed with tempeſts and troubles of various kinds, whereby the children of Zion have been brought, and ſtill ly, under great diſtreſs and affliction.

The

The firſt impreſſion of this book being diſpoſe
and a ſecond called for, I have the more readily
ſented to it, at this time of general calamity and dif
ſeeing the book is intended as a Directory to Chriſ
under affliction, whatever ſort it be. It cannot bu
obvious to every ſerious obſerver, that the Lord's j
ments are in the earth at this day, and that the in
tants of this land are generally viſited with calam
of divers kinds, both ſpiritual and temporal; w
makes a Directory how to manage and carry u
them the more ſeaſonable and neceſſary.

Ah! the Lord's hand is viſibly lifted up againſt
this day, and hath been for ſome years paſt, in ſhu
up the churches womb, blaſting goſpel-ordinances,
withdrawing his Spirit from the aſſemblies of his pe
and from our judicatories. The flood-gate is op
for error, infidelity, and looſeneſs, to overſpread
land; ſo that the goſpel of Chriſt, the holy Script
and all revealed religion, are condemned and ridic
by many. "The anger of the Lord hath divided us
in church and ſtate, and hath mingled a perverſe
in the midſt of us;" yea, hath made ſuch woful brea
among godly miniſters and Chriſtians, who are ai
at the ſame things, that no balm can be found for
ing them. There is a way opened for a carnal ſelf-
ing miniſter to get into the vineyard, when faithfu
bourers are thruſt out, and godly preachers and ſtuc
are diſcouraged from entering in. Not a few Chri
congregations, who lately were harmonious and uni
partaking of goſpel-ordinances, are now ſo miſer
rent and ſcattered, through mournful intruſions an
viding courſes, that they cannot worſhip God toget
and many of them are wandering like ſheep having
ſhepherd, expoſed to beaſts of prey, and liable to p
in a ſtate of ignorance or negligence.

Likewiſe, the Lord's hand is remarkably lifted u
gainſt us, in the variety of temporal judgments anc
lamities brought upon us within a very ſhort time
paſt. Sometimes the Lord ſends forth his ſto
winds with extraordinary violence, ſo as to carry
ror and deſtruction along with them both by ſea
land, and even threaten to bury us in the ruin of
ho

houſes. Sometimes he ſends ſuch long continued rains in harveſt, as threaten to deſtroy the whole crop before our eyes. Sometimes ſuch extraordinary ſtorms of froſt and ſnow, as to bind up the waters and mills, that food cannot be prepared for us, and we are ready to periſh in midſt of plenty. Sometimes he ſends ſuch deſtructive ſtorms of lightning and thunder from heaven, and kindles ſuch violent fires on earth, that whole cities, with their inhabitants, are like to be conſumed therewith. Upon our neighbouring countries dreadful inundations have been ſent of late, for deſtroying the inhabitants with their cattle and effects. Again, God hath viſited us with long continued drought, cold and unnatural ſtorms in the ſpring, and ſometimes with froſt in midſt of ſummer, which have brought on extraordinary ſcarcity and dearth of victual, ſo that there are great diſorders committed in the land by riots and tumults for want of food, and multitudes of families are diſſolved, and forced to wander begging their bread; and the cattle alſo are famiſhed for want of graſs and food to ſuſtain them. In the mean time we are engaged in war with cruel enemies, who ſeize our ſhips, carry our countrymen captives, throw them into dungeons and nauſeous priſons, where they uſe them barbarouſly; yea, much of their blood is ſhed, and many valuable lives are loſt in our defence. And, beſides our other calamities, we ſuffer greatly through decay of trade and merchandiſe, and penury of money; in many places, merchants, tradeſmen, and artificers, want buſineſs; there is no work nor hire for labourers, and for thoſe who would uſe honeſt induſtry for bread, whether men or women: ſo that want is "come upon us as one that travaileth, and poverty like an armed man," and many are reduced to extreme miſery, and ſtarving circumſtances, for lack of bread.

By all which proceedings it appears that God hath a peculiar controverſy with Scotland, and threatens to puniſh her remarkably for her heinous ſins and provocations. The Lord's hand hath been long lifted up againſt us, and now it is higher lifted up than ever: and, the higher it is lifted, the blow is like to be the ſeverer when given. He hath ſent many leſſer ſtrokes and judgments upon us, *as forerunners and warnings* of greater, which

he hath ſtill his reſerve for us, if we repent not; for his magazine is far from being exhauſted. As there are many cauſes for theſe calamities of ours, ſo I think there is a principal one mentioned, Mat. xxiv. 12. "Iniquity doth abound, and the love of many is waxen cold." Infidelity, immorality, and contempt of the goſpel, are come to a prodigious height: our hearts are become cold and frozen to Chriſt and his intereſt, to his people and holy laws: for which cauſe, God is provoked to ſend ſuch judicial cold and froſts upon our land, and the fruits of the earth, ſo as to mar and diminiſh our crops, and reduce both men and beaſts to the greateſt ſtraits. And yet ſo great is our impenitence and perverſeneſs, that we will not ſee the Lord's hand, nor be reformed by all theſe judgments.

It might well be expected, when the Lord's judgments are ſo viſible in the earth, that not only his people by profeſſion, but even the inhabitants of the world, would learn righteouſneſs, according to Iſa. xxvii. 9. But, alas! So perverſe are we to walk with God, that neither the inhabitants of the world, nor thoſe who profeſs to be ſeparated from the world, will alter their courſe, nor learn righteouſneſs; nay, inſtead of that, many are learning ſtill more wickedneſs, "Shall I not viſit for theſe things? ſaith the Lord: and ſhall not my ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this?" Alas! hath he not been provoked to ſay concerning us, as he did concerning his ancient people, Lev. xxvi. 23, 24. "If ye will not be reformed by all theſe things, but will walk contrary unto me: then will I alſo walk contrary unto you, and will bring ſeven times more plagues upon you, according to your ſins." And likewiſe to ſay unto us, as unto them, "When ye ſpread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you; and when ye faſt and make many prayers, I will not hear: but I will conſume you with the ſword, with the famine, and with the peſtilence," as in Iſa. i. 15. Jer. xiv. 12.

The ſword, famine, and peſtilence, are God's three mortal arrows, which he commonly threatens to ſhoot againſt impenitent and incorrigible offenders. Two of theſe are already ſhot againſt us: the ſword is drawn, and much of our countrymen's blood is already ſhed; and

and what further ſtreams of it may flow before it be put up in its ſheath, God only knows. The evil arrow of famine (as God calls it, Ezek. v. 16.) is let fly againſt us at the ſame time, and the famine is the arrow which is the ſoreſt of the three. When it was put to David's choice, which of the three he would be the butt of, he would not chuſe famine. The prophet Joel doth bewail and deprecate this judgment in the moſt pathetic manner, and calls the whole land to faſting and prayer, for removing it, Joel i. 10. 14. And we ſee, when God is moſt angry, and threatens to ſpend his arrows upon a guilty people, he begins with the arrow of famine as the ſoreſt, as in Deut. xxxii. 23, 24. "I will ſpend mine arrows upon them, they ſhall be burnt with hunger." And we ſee what the Spirit of God ſaith of thoſe who die by this arrow, Lam. iv. 9. "They that be ſlain with the ſword, are better than they that be ſlain with hunger; for theſe pine away; ſtricken through for want of the fruits of the field;" and therefore their death is moſt lingering and miſerable. Likewiſe, famine uſeth to bring on the moſt nauſeous and mortal diſeaſes, and frequently the peſtilence doth follow upon the back of famine. Is it not then high time for our land to take the alarm, when God begins to ſhoot his evil arrows? When the lion roars, it becometh us to fear; yea, to humble ourſelves in the duſt, and mourn for our iniquities, which kindle the fire of wrath.

Let us ſearch and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord, from whom we have deeply revolted: and, particularly, let us mourn for, and turn from, thoſe ſins which the word of God points out as bringing on famine; ſuch as, 1. Aſcribing our earthly comforts and bleſſings to other things than God the true author. This ſin we find threatened with ſcarcity and famine, Jer. xliv. 17. 26, 27. Hoſ. ii. 5. 9—2. Perverting of plenty to luxury and prodigality, ſenſuality and exceſs, revellings and dancings, balls and aſſemblies. We ſee how theſe are threatened, Iſa. v. 11, 12, 13. Amos vi. 4, 6, 7—3. Rejecting the bread of life, and deſpiſing the food of our ſouls. God uſed to puniſh men for their ſins, by depriving them of bread for their bodies, Jer. xi. 21, 22.—4. Men minding their own things

more than the things of God; and neglecting to build his houſe, and put reſpect upon his ordinances. Upon ſuch account God brings on ſcarcity and famine, Hag. i. 9, 10, 11.—5. Covenant-breaking, and dealing cruelly with the poor, or with ſtrangers that live among us: It was for theſe ſins that God ſent a three years famine upon the land of Iſrael, 2 Sam. xxi. 1.

Moreover, let us look upon all theſe temporal ſtorms and calamities which are come or coming upon the land, as warnings to prepare for a more awful ſtorm that we muſt all meet with; namely, the ſtorm of death and judgment; let us ſtand habitually prepared for that ſtorm, and then other ſtorms will not ſo much affect us. If it be asked, What we ſhall do to be ſafe in time of that trying ſtorm? the anſwer is, Let us ſee that we be among the broken in heart, or the ſincere penitents, who are heartily grieved for all known ſin: That we be true believers in Chriſt, who truſt in nothing but his righteouſneſs and merits, for juſtification and ſalvation: That we be born again, and made new creatures by a ſaving change both in heart and life: That it be our great buſineſs to clear up our evidences of peace with God through Chriſt, and of our title to the manſions which he hath purchaſed by his blood. O that God's judgments, when they are on the earth, were means to awaken us to flee from the wrath to come, to Chriſt our refuge! when the floods of great waters are ſwelling up to the brim, our only ſafety is to ſecure a hiding place in Chriſt's wounds.

Let us follow the example of Noah, who, when he ſaw the flood coming, took warning, and prepared an ark for ſaving himſelf and his houſhold, Heb. xi. 7. Let us even imitate the Egyptians that feared the Lord; they, when warned of the dreadful ſtorm of hail that was coming on the land, made their ſervants and cattle to flee into the houſes, Exod. ix. 20. God hath in mercy, provided chambers for his people to hide themſelves in, when ſtorms are coming, even the chambers of his attributes and promiſes, and the chambers of Chriſt's wounds and interceſſion; in theſe only we can find ſafety; let us enter into them by faith, when he invites us, Iſa. xxvi. 20, 21.

Seeing

Seeing in theſe evil days we have ſo many harbingers and fore runners of death before our eyes, it will be highly our wiſdom to keep ourſelves ſtill in a waiting poſture always ready and willing to die. What is there in this weary land to tempt us to deſire to abide in it? Is it not a land overwhelmed with ſin and ſorrow? O believers, are you toſſed with tempeſts here? Seek the wings of a dove, that you may fly away and be at reſt. Be habitually deſiring to depart, that you may be with Chriſt. Surely for you to die is gain, yea, infinite gain! What are the imaginary pleaſures of this world to the real happineſs of the next? tho' the ſtruggles of death be grievous to nature, yet the gains of dying ſhould reconcile you to it. You do not ſtick at the trouble of putting off your cloaths at night, to gain a little reſt to your bodies; and why ſhould you ſtick at uncloathing yourſelves of the garments of fleſh at God's call, to gain everlaſting reſt to your ſouls, and the fruition of Chriſt's glorious preſence for ever? Let the thoughts of this gain put you upon uſing all means to get your hearts weaned from the love of the world and its comforts. Keep the mantle of earthly enjoyments hanging looſe about you, eſpecially in theſe calamitous times, that ſo it may be eaſily dropt when death comes to carry you to the eternal world. O for more of the lively faith of that world, and of him that is the Lord and purchaſer of it! But ſeeing this ſubject is more largely inſiſted on in the book itſelf, I ſhall add no more here upon it; only I ſhall ſubjoin a collection of ſome ſweet and comfortable texts of ſcripture, very proper for dying believers, to meditate and feed on by faith, to grip to and plead with God, and ſuck conſolation from, when they have a near proſpect of going through the dark valley, and entering into the unknown regions of eternity. God's word will then be our hope.

A COLLECTION

A COLLECTION
OF
COMFORTABLE TEXTS
For Dying Believers.

COME unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt, Mat. xi. 28. Him that cometh to me I will in nowiſe caſt out, John vi. 37.

In my Father's houſe are many manſions; if it were not ſo, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myſelf, that where I am, there ye may be alſo, John xiv. 2, 3.

Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo, John xiv. 19.

Chriſt ſaith, Surely I come quickly. *Anſ.* Amen. Even ſo, come Lord Jeſus, Rev. xxii. 20.

There remaineth a reſt to the people of God, Heb. iv. 9.

I have waited for thy ſalvation, O Lord, Gen. xlix. 18.

Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace; for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation, Luke ii. 29, 30.

He is the Rock, and his work is perfect, Deut. xxxii 4.

The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me, Pſal. cxxxviii. 8.

Being confident —— that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jeſus Chriſt, Phil. i. 6.

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth. And though, after my ſkin, worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God; whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and mine eyes ſhall behold, and not another; though my reins be conſumed within me, Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

Although my houſe is not ſo with God, yet he hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, ordered in all things

things and ſure. For this is all my ſalvation and all my deſire, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, Pſal. xxiii. 4.

Into thine hand I commit my Spirit: thou haſt redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth, Pſal. xxxi. 5.

For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death, Pſal. xlviii. 14.

Thou ſhalt guide me with thy counſel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee. My fleſh and my heart faileth; but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever, Pſal. lxxii. 24, 25, 26.

The ſacrifices of God are a broken ſpirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe, Pſal. li. 17.

O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at reſt. I would haſten my eſcape from the windy ſtorms and tempeſt, Pſal. lx. 6, 8.

Though ye have lien among the pots, yet ſhall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with ſilver, and her feathers with yellow gold, Pſal. lxviii. 13.

The blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin, 1 John i. 7.

Having boldneſs to enter into the Holieſt by the blood of Jeſus, Heb x. 19.

He hath ſaid, I will never leave thee nor forſake thee. Jeſus Chriſt, the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and forever, Heb. xiii. 5, 8.

He retaineth not his anger for ever, becauſe he delighteth in mercy, Micah vii. 18.

Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him, Job xiii. 15.

In his name ſhall the Gentiles truſt, Mat. xii. 23.

Bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him, Pſal. ii. 12.

He knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are duſt, Pſal. ciii. 14.

I lothe it, I would not live alway, Job vii. 16.

We

We know, that if our earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We are willing rather to be abſent from the body and preſent with the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 1, 8.

For me to live is Chriſt, and to die is gain. Having a deſire to depart and to be with Chriſt, which is far better, Phil. i. 21, 23.

And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee, Pſal. xxxix. 7.

My beloved is mine, and I am his. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me. Awake, O north wind, come, thou ſouth, blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleaſant fruits. Until the day break and the ſhadows fly away, make haſte, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart on the mountains of ſpices, Cant. ii. 6, 16, 17. and iv. 16. and viii. 14.

O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, thro' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 57.

The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith. Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous Judge ſhall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them alſo that love his appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8.

The day of death is better than the day of one's birth, Eccl. vii. 1.

And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain; for the former things are paſſed away, Rev. xxi. 4.

This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners, of whom I am chief, 1 Tim. i. 15.

God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life, John iii. 16.

For he hath made him to be ſin for us who knew no ſin;

ſn; that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God, in him, 2 Cor. v. 21.

Thanks be unto God for his unſpeakable gift, 2 Cor. ix. 15.

Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, for he hath viſited and redeemed his people, and hath raiſed up an horn of ſalvation for us in the houſe of his ſervant David, Luke i. 68, 69.

Them which ſleep in Jeſus, will God bring with him. Then ſhall we be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: And ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord, 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. 17.

Unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, &c. Worthy is the lamb that was ſlain to receive power and glory; Rev. i. 5. and v. 12.

We know that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren, 1 John iii. 14.

I am perſuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhould be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, Rom. viii. 38, 39.

I know whom I have believed, and am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him againſt that day, 3 Tim. i. 12.

I count all things but loſs and dung, that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs, &c. Phil. iii. 8, 9.

Chriſt Jeſus who is made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30.

We rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh, Phil. iii. 3.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light, Col. i. 12.

Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye ſhall ſee him. Amen. Even ſo come, Lord Jeſus, Rev. i. 7. and xxii. 20.

DUNDEE, 5th June 1741.

SOME EJACULATIONS & DYING WORDS OF THE AUTHOR.

To my Wife.

My Dear,

MY diſtreſs calls me to think of parting with you: the will of the Lord be done. I thank you for your tender care of me, may the Lord bleſs and reward you for it, and ſanctify your own tenderneſs, and ſupport you under it. As you have ſtudied to live a life of faith and prayer all your days, ſo I hope and believe you will continue to the end. In all your difficulties and fears, encourage yourſelf in the Lord your God: Commit your ways to him; truſt him that is faithful and true. I reſign you, my dear, to the HUSBAND of huſbands, our deareſt Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

To my Children.

DEAR Children, your earthly father muſt leave you, your heavenly Father is immortal. O! cleave faſt to him. Trifle not about your ſouls concerns in time of health; mind theſe things as the one thing needful; this you will not repent of when you come within a near view of death and endleſs eternity. O ſirs! preſs for clear views of your intereſt in Chriſt, the only ſurety and Saviour of ſinners. Among other evidences of it, live by faith on him, and ſtudy holineſs in heart and life. Dear children, think how you will be able to ſtand before Chriſt your judge, at the laſt day, unleſs you have Chriſt's image on you, and be made new creatures. Lord make you all ſuch, and bleſs you with his beſt bleſſing! My bleſſing be upon you all. —What means God gave me, I have beſtowed them on you, or left them to you.—Be kind and careful of your mother while you have her. And let none of you forget, that though I go before you to the duſt,

you

you muſt all quickly follow me. O! that we may all meet together at the right hand of our bleſſed Redeemer, to ſee his face, and ſing his praiſe. The time is near, be ye therefore alſo ready.

Now, my dear wife and children, remember what is above, as the words of your affectionate huſband and loving father, who, being dead, yet hereby ſpeaketh to you for your eternal good and happineſs; may they ſink deep into your heart: So prayeth

JOHN WILLISON.

SOME OF HIS DYING EJACULATIONS.

O LET me ſleep in Jeſus! I would not live always in this evil world, that has little in it tempting, and ſeems ſtill to grow worſe, and where the torrent of ſin and backſliding ſeems to grow ſtronger.

I would deſire to depart and be with Chriſt, which is far better than to be here. I am willing rather to be abſent from the body, and preſent with the Lord. Whom have I in heaven but thee; for though my heart, ſtrength, and fleſh, fail, yet the Lord will be the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Now, Lord, what wait I for, my hope is in thee, I have waited for thy ſalvation, O Lord.

O for Simeon's frame, to be ſaying, "Lord, letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation."

When Chriſt ſays, Surely I come quickly; may my ſoul anſwer, Even ſo, come, Lord Jeſus.

I am living on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, yea, dying in the Lord. Even ſo, come. I am detained here upon the ſhore, waiting for a fair wind to carry me over this Jordan. I have waited, and will wait for thy ſalvation, O Lord. The Lord is a rock, and his work is perfect: Lord, perfect what concerneth me.

O that I could ſay with Paul, The time of my departure is at hand. I have kept the faith, I have run my race, I have finiſhed my courſe; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the righteous Lord will give me at his coming.

I am vile and polluted, O how ſhall I be cleanſed: But that is a comfortable promiſe, "The blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son, cleanſeth us from all ſin." And ſo is that, "Though ye have lien among the pots, ye ſhall be as doves, whoſe wings are covered with ſilver, and their feathers with yellow gold."

I reſolve to obey, to ſubmit to the Lord's will, to die like Moſes and Aaron, the one at the mount Hor, the other at mount Abarim. They went up and died there at the command of the Lord.

O that when my ſtrength and fleſh fail, God may be the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever. When now the keepers of the houſe do tremble, O that God may be the keeper: when the grinders ceaſe, becauſe they are few, O that God would feed my ſoul with manna, that will need none of theſe implements; when the daughters of muſic are brought low, O to be fitted for the heavenly muſic above: When the lookers out at the windows are darkened, O that my ſoul may be enlightened to ſee Jeſus my Redeemer.

Lord, help the unbelief and infidelity of my heart, and help to more of the faith of a riſen Jeſus, an aſcended Redeemer. O let me believe and feel the ſweetneſs of that word of Chriſt, "I aſcend to my Father, and to your Father, and to your God and my God."

O how ſhall ſuch an unholy creature as I preſume to enter into ſuch a pure and holy place! But the apoſtle has taught us, we may have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt of all by the blood of Jeſus.

O that when the time of my laſt combat comes with my laſt enemy death, I may be helped above all to take the ſhield of faith, whereby I may be relieved from the ſting of death, and may quench the fiery darts of the wicked one.

O that I may be helped to adore the ſovereignty of God, kiſs his rod, and humbly ſubmit to it. Save me from both extremities; let me never deſpiſe the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when I am rebuked of him.

Now the prince of darkneſs will ſtudy to raiſe tempeſts of temptations to ſhipwreck the poor weather-beaten veſſel of my ſoul, when it would enter into the harbour

harbour of reſt above; may Chriſt come to be pilot, ſteer the helm, and it ſhall be ſafe.

O for more faith! may my faith ripen to a full aſſurance, that I may go off the ſtage rejoicing, and that abundant entrance may be miniſtered to me into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

O for more faith! that I may die like Simeon, when he had Chriſt in his arms, ſaying, "Now let thy ſervant depart in peace, mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation."

Lord, one ſmile of thy countenance would baniſh away all my doubts and fears, and make me ſing in pain.

Is my Redeemer gone to prepare a place for us; why ſhould I be ſo ſlothful to follow his footſteps, when he is ſaying, "Come up hither;" come up, dwell here; come up, reign here; come up, ſing here.

O Lord, deliver my ſoul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. O ſave me from the horrible pit, draw me out of the miry clay, ſet my feet upon a rock, and eſtabliſh my goings, and put a new ſong in my mouth.

O give grace to ſtrive by faith and prayer, to enter in at the ſtrait gate. Lord, thou haſt bid me knock, and it ſhall be opened, aſk, and ye ſhall find. Lord, I knock, open unto me; I would be in, I muſt be in; let me but in over the threſhold; let me in within ſight of my Redeemer's face, within ſight of the ſmiles of his countenance, let me within hearing of the ſongs of the redeemed; let me get to the out ſide of that praiſing company; I will be well enough if I get in.

Lord, in I muſt be, out I cannot ſtay: O ſhut me not out with ſwearers, ſabbath-breakers, and profane perſons: Lord, I never chuſed their company while in this world; Lord, do not gather my ſoul with ſinners hereafter.

The redeemed are gathering, and the wicked are gathering; Lord, gather me with thy flock:—They are faſt a-gathering; the church's head is gone; he has left the earth, and entered into his glory; my brethren and friends, many of them have arrived where he is; I am yet behind. O how great is the difference betwixt my ſtate and theirs. I am groaning out my complaint,

they

they are ſinging God's praiſe: I am in darkneſs, and cannot ſee thy face, but they behold thee face to face. O ſhould I be ſatisfied to ſtay behind, when my friends are gone?—Shall I wander here in a hungry deſart, when they are triumphing above and dividing the ſpoil? O help me to look after them with a ſtedfaſt eye, and cry, O Lord, how long?

O heavenly Father, draw me after Jeſus, for none can come to him without thy aid. O Father, draw me up there where he is, and I will mount up as on eagle's wings. O draw me, and when thou ſeemeſt to fly from me, Lord enable me to follow hard after thee.

Lord give me the ſtaff of promiſe in my hand, that I may go over Jordan with it; O give me ſuch a promiſe as that, "When thou paſſeſt through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee. When thou walkeſt through the fire thou ſhalt not be burnt, neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee."

Lord, my experiences are ſmall, my manifeſtations are few: theſe I will not lean to: yet I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, from the Hermonites, and from the hill Mizar. Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul, and why diſquieted within me! Hope thou in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.

O thou who rememberedſt the dying thief when on the way to thy kingdom, O remember me when now ſeated in thy kingdom, and ſay to my ſoul, when I am dying, "This day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe."

Lord, I am called to the work I never did, O give me the ſtrength I never had. O ſtrengthen me like Samſon for this once when at death, to pull down the ſtrong holds of ſin in me. Lord, waſh away my ſins in the blood of Chriſt, and then my ſoul ſhall not ſink in the ocean of thy wrath.

O what is my life but a vapour! a ſand-glaſs of ſixty or ſeventy years! O how faſt does it run down! How ſoon runs it out! Vain, vain is the love of life! O give me grace to overcome the love of life, and the fear of death. O for more patience and leſs fretting.

If

If the damned had hope of being ſaved from hell after a thouſand years of my pain, how willingly would they endure it. Bleſſed be God, my pains are not hell, their ſtate is not mine.

Lord, draw near to me, and ſave me; my body is full of trouble, and my life draws near to the grave. But, Lord, thy loving kindneſs is better than life. O make thy loving kindneſs ſure to me, and I will willingly part with this dying life.

O that I could make all the world ſee the beauty of my precious and adorable Saviour!

Nothing but an intereſt in Chriſt can give peace in life, or comfort in death. He is the chief among ten thouſand, altogether lovely. My body is in part dead, but I know I cannot die eternally while Jeſus lives. I muſt go down to the grave; but what is the grave?—It is but a refining pot, ſince my Saviour lay in it, it is but a bed of roſes. He is the *Roſe of Sharon, and the Lilly of the valley.*

It was his free grace that drew me, and made me willing in the day of his power; no deſire, no merit in me; it was all free and undeſerved.

O let the chaſtiſement of my body be the medicine of my ſoul, to cure me of ſin, and bring me to ſincere repentance for it; for Chriſt was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities; the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him.

Lord, remember the chaſtiſement of Chriſt for ſin, and let my pains be the chaſtiſement of a father, and not the wounds of an enemy; let Chriſt's ſufferings mitigate mine.

I rejoice in the proſpect of that glorious inheritance reſerved ſafe. I would not comfortably enter eternity any other way but in and through this God man-mediator; if he was not God as well as man, I could not be ſupported:—but he is God.

O this precious Saviour, he is my all in all, he is my all-ſufficient good, my portion and my choice; in him my vaſt deſires are fulfilled, and all my powers rejoice, I am travelling through a wilderneſs to a city of habitation, whoſe builder and maker is God.

O delightful

O delightful thought! that I, who was going on in ſin, ſhould be plucked as a brand out of the burning. O how will they lie on a death-bed, that have nothing but their works to fly to; with only this to depend on, I ſhould be the moſt miſerable of all creatures; but the long white robe of my Redeemer's righteouſneſs is all my deſire. They are truly bleſſed, they alone are happy, who are enabled to exult in the garment of celeſtial glory, which never waxeth old, in the illuſtrious robes of a Saviour's conſummate righteouſneſs, which are incorruptible and immortal. This is a robe which hides every ſin, of thought, word, or deed, that I have committed. O how unſpeakably happy are they who are juſtified by this all-perfect righteouſneſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and who therein can conſtantly triumph and glory.

Lord, I live upon Chriſt, I live upon his righteouſneſs, I live upon his blood and merits; yea, I die alſo, leaning wholly upon this bottom. It is not paſt experiences or manifeſtations I depend upon; it is Chriſt, a preſent all-ſufficient Saviour, and perfect righteouſneſs in him I look to. All my attainments are but loſs and dung beſides him.

When I find myſelf polluted, I go to this fountain for cleanſing. Lord give me delight in approaching to thee;—delight to be at a throne of grace. O that I could make my bed there, lie and die there.

The kingdom of heaven ſuffers violence, and the violent take it by force. O for ſtrength to offer a holy violence by faith and prayer.

THE

THE

AFFLICTED MAN'S COMPANION:

OR, A

DIRECTORY

FOR A FAMILY OR PERSON UNDER AFFLICTION, BY SICKNESS OR OTHERWISE.

THE INTRODUCTION.

MAN, when he first dropped from his Maker's hands, was a holy and innocent creature, pure from sin, and consequently free from sickness and trouble, enjoying uninterrupted health and prosperity both in body and soul. But no sooner was he tainted with sin, but he became liable to all sorts of miseries, temporal, spiritual, and eternal; his soul being the residence of his sins and lusts, his body turned the receptacle of sickness and diseases. And seeing God's own children have ths relics of sin and corruption in them while in this world, they are not to expect exemption from such afflictions; and the infinitely wise God sees meet to make use of bodily distempers to correct the corruptions, and try the graces, of his people, and to promote both their spiritual and eternal advantage. Hence it is said of Lazarus, John xi. 3. "Behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." He was beloved, and yet sick. It is no rare thing for the dearest of God's saints to be put to chatter like cranes, and mourn like doves, by reason of sore sickness, as Hezekiah did, Isa. xxxviii. 14. Sanctified and healthy souls may be matched with weak and sickly bodies, as was Gaius, 3 John 2. Notwithstanding the case is sometimes most trying and exercising to the best of God's people, and they are never more ready to question God's love, or quarrel with his Providence, than under heavy

ſickneſs and bodily diſtreſs. It is therefore highly the concernment of all, whether families or private perſons, to enquire how they ought to behave under or after afflicting ſickneſs; and how they ſhall provide for ſuch an evil time before it come. And, for the help of all that deſire inſtruction in this matter, I have written the following Directory, which, for method's ſake, I ſhall divide into ſeveral chapters.

I. I ſhall give ſome general directions to all families and perſons viſited with ſickneſs and affliction.

II. Some particular directions to thoſe who are ſharply afflicted with ſore ſickneſs and long trouble.

III. Directions to the children of God under ſickneſs.

IV. Directions to unregenerate perſons under ſickneſs.

V. Directions to the people of God, when recovered from ſickneſs.

VI. Directions to unrenewed perſons recovered from ſickneſs.

VII. Directions to thoſe ſick perſons who are apparently in a dying condition.

VIII. Directions to the relations, acquaintances, and neighbours of the ſick, who are themſelves in health for the time.

N. B. Let it be remembered, that what I ſay to thoſe viſited with ſickneſs, is likewiſe applicable to all other afflicted perſons, whatever their diſtreſs be.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Containing General Directions to all Families and Perſons viſited with ſickneſs.

DIRECT. I. Diligently enquire into the Ends and Deſigns for which uſually God ſends ſickneſs and affliction upon perſons.

AN infinitely holy and gracious God hath various and wiſe ends in afflicting the children of men, whether they be converted or unconverted; which ought to be duly conſidered by all, and eſpecially by thoſe who are viſited by ſickneſs; ſome whereof I ſhall inſtance.

I. God viſits with ſickneſs, to cauſe careleſs ſinners bethink themſelves concerning their ſouls eſtate and condition, who perhaps had never a ſerious thought about it before. There are many, who, when in health and ſtrength, are ſo intent upon the pleaſures and profits of the world, that they mind nothing elſe; all the warnings, exhortations, and counſels of miniſters, teachers, and friends, are loſt upon them; they cannot endure to entertain a thought of God, of the ſoul, of death, of heaven, of hell, or of judgment to come; till God doth caſt them into ſome ſickneſs or bodily diſtreſs, and then ſometimes they begin, with the prodigal, to come to themſelves, and bethink themſelves concerning their ſouls and a future life. Now, this is God's deſign, 1 Kings viii. 47. "If they bethink themſelves in the land whither they are carried captives, and repent," &c. By ſickneſs, God gives a man, that before was wholly diverted from ſoul-matters, by buſineſs, company, and pleaſures, occaſion to bethink himſelf. The man is now confined to his chamber, is deprived of his former company and diverſions, and ſo gets time and leiſure to commune with his own heart, and reflect on his former

ways, and to hear what conſcience ſpeaks concerning a judgment day, and a world to come, and the need of a Saviour. And ſo, by the bleſſing of God upon ſuch afflictions, not a few have begun their firſt acquaintance with God and Chriſt, and ſerious religion. Nay, the furnace is Chriſt's uſual work-houſe, where he has formed the moſt excellent veſſels of honour and praiſe, Iſa. xlviii. 10. "I have choſen thee in the furnace of affliction." Manaſſah, the Prodigal, Paul, and the Jailor, were all choſen there.

II. God viſits us with ſickneſs, in order to inſtruct and teach us thoſe things we know not, Pſal. xcvi. 12. It was a ſaying of Luther, "Schola crucis eſt ſchola lucis." And indeed the ſchool of affliction is the place where many of Zion's ſcholars have made good proficiency in ſpiritual and experimental knowledge. Now, there are ſeveral remarkable leſſons which God would teach us by the rod.

1. The knowledge of God. It is ſaid of Manaſſeh, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13. "When he was brought to affliction," &c. "then Manaſſeh knew that the Lord he was God." Though Manaſſeh was well educated, and early taught the knowledge of God; yet, till now, he knew not the Lord:—But now he knew him in his power and greatneſs, his holineſs and hatred of ſin; now he knew God in his goodneſs and mercy, and wondered that he had kept him ſo long out of hell.

2. Another leſſon is the knowledge of ourſelves. In time of health and proſperity, we are apt to forget ourſelves, and our mortality: but ſickneſs cauſeth us to know that we are but men, and frail men, Pſal. ix. 20. that God hath an abſolute ſovereignty over us, and can as eaſily cruſh us as we do a moth.

3. He teacheth us the emptineſs of the world. How vain a help is that, which fails a man in the time of his greateſt need! And oftentimes we ſee, that worldly means and friends can neither give the leaſt eaſe to the bodies, nor comfort to the ſouls of perſons under ſickneſs and diſtreſs.

4. Another leſſon is the great evil of ſin, which is the cauſe of all ſickneſs and diſeaſes whatſoever, 1 Cor. xi.

xi. 30. "For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you." Ah! what a root of bitterneſs muſt that be, which brings forth ſuch bitter fruit!

5. He ſheweth us the precioufneſs and excellency of Chriſt and his promiſes; which only can enable a Chriſtian to rejoice in tribulation, and be eaſy under the greateſt pains and diſeaſes. There are many who are indifferent about Chriſt in time of health, that when ſickneſs comes, do change their note, and cry, O for an intereſt in Chriſt above all things!

III. God ſends ſuch trials and diſtreſſes, in order to mortify and kill ſin in us, Iſa. xxvi. 9. "By this ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his ſin." And, indeed, ſickneſs and affliction, through the bleſſing of God, hath a native tendency to weaken and ſubdue our prevailing ſins and luſts. O man, is thy heart turned hard, ſo as thou art not ſenſible of thy own ſins, or of others ſufferings? God ſees meet to try the fire of affliction, to ſee if it will melt thy frozen heart. Haſt thou undervalued health, and ſlighted thy mercies? Now God removes them from thee, that, by the want of them, thou mayeſt know the worth of them. Art thou turned proud and ſelf-conceited? God ſends thee a thorn in the fleſh, to prick the ſwoln bladder of pride, that thou mayeſt not be puffed up above meaſure: God lays thee low upon thy bed, that thou mayeſt be lowly in thy heart. Doth love for the world prevail in thee? God ſends affliction to diſcover its emptineſs, and wean thee from it. Art thou fallen ſecure, dead, and formal? God ſends affliction to awake thee, that thou mayeſt not ſleep the ſleep of death.

IV. God ſends ſickneſs, to awaken in us the ſpirit of prayer and ſupplication, and make us more earneſt and importunate in our addreſſes to the throne of grace. There is a great difference betwixt our prayers in health and in ſickneſs, betwixt our humiliations in proſperity and in adverſity. In proſperity we pray heavily and drowſily, but adverſity adds wings to our deſires, Iſa. xxvi. 16. "Lord, in trouble have they viſited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chaſtening was upon

on them." Though they were backward enough to pray before, yet they pour it out moſt freely now. The very heathen mariners cried loud to God in a ſtorm. What a famous prayer did Manaſſeh make, when he was under his fetters! We find it thrice mentioned, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13, 18, 19. And the voice of a fervent prayer is what the Lord deſires to hear.

V. Another end is, to looſe our hearts from things of this world, and cauſe us look to and long for heaven. When we enjoy health and eaſe in this world, we are apt to ſay with Peter on the mount, "It is good for us to be here;" but, when diſtreſs cometh, God's people will turn their tongue, and ſay, with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxiii. 27. "It is good for me to draw nigh to God." When things here go well with us, we are apt to think ourſelves at home; but, when trouble ariſeth, we begin to ſay, "Ariſe, let us depart, this is not our reſt." Though heaven was much out of ſight, and out of mind before; yet, when afflicting ſickneſs comes, the poor believer will ſigh, and ſay with David, Pſal. lv. 6. "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at reſt: I would haſten my eſcape from the windy tempeſt."

VI. God deſigns to make the world bitter, and Chriſt ſweet to us. By ſuch affliction, he lets men ſee that the world is nothing but vanity and vexation of ſpirit; that riches avail not in the day of wrath; then it is they may ſee the inſufficiency of the world to relieve them, that, as one ſaith, "A velvet ſlipper cannot cure the gout, a golden cap cannot drive away the headache, nor a bed of down give eaſe in a fever." And as the world turns bitter, ſo Chriſt grows ſweet to the believer. In time of eaſe and health, Chriſt is often very much neglected and forgot. As the diſciples, while the ſea was calm, ſuffered Chriſt to ſleep with them in the ſhip, thinking they might make their voyage well enough without his help; but when they were ready to be drowned, then they ſaw their need of Chriſt, they awaked him, crying, "Maſter, ſave us, or elſe we periſh." So the beſt of ſaints, when all is eaſy about them, are

prone

prone to ſuffer Chriſt to ſleep within them, and ſo to neglect the lively actings of faith in Chriſt; but when the ſtorm of affliction begins to ariſe, and they are ready to be overwhelmed with diſtreſs, then they cry, "None but Chriſt, none but Chriſt."

VII. God tryſts with ſickneſs and diſtreſs, in order both to prove and improve his people's graces, Deut. viii. 2. Rev. ii. 10. Grace is hereby both tried and ſtrengthened. 1. Such afflictions do prove both the truth and ſtrength of our graces, as they ſerve to try if we love God for himſelf, if we can endure to hold out in ſerving him, waiting and depending upon him, notwithſtanding of diſcouragements. That faith will ſuffice for a little affliction, that will not ſuffice for a great one. Peter had faith enough to come upon the ſea at Chriſt's call; but, as ſoon as the waves began to ſwell, his faith began to fail, and his feet to ſink, till Chriſt mercifully caught hold of him, ſaying, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didſt thou doubt?" Mat. xiv. 31. Little did Peter think his faith was ſo weak till now.

2. They tend to improve our graces alſo, by quickening and ſtrengthening them. They ſerve as a whetſtone to ſharpen faith, ſo as the ſoul is made to renounce earthly ſhelters, and to claſp about God, in Chriſt, as its only refuge and portion. They excite to repentance and ſerious mourning for ſin; for, like the winter froſts and ſnows, they make the fallow ground of our hearts more tender. They prompt us to heavenly mindedneſs, ſelf-denial, and patient waiting on God. Yea, the experience of God's people can atteſt it, that grace is never more lively than under affliction. David never found himſelf better, as to his ſpiritual ſtate, than when he was perſecuted and hunted as a partridge on the mountains; and hence he ſays, Pſal. cxix. 17. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

VIII. God's aim is, to awake us to redeem time, to prepare for flitting, and clear up our evidences for heaven. In time of health, we are apt to trifle away time, loiter in our journey, and forget that we are pilgrims on the earth; wherefore God ſends ſickneſs as his meſſenger to mind us hereof.

Now

Now it highly concerns us, when ſickneſs attacks us, to conſider and meditate upon thoſe ends for which God brings on diſtreſs, and pray earneſtly that they may be accompliſhed in us; and ſo our ſickneſs ſhall not be unto death, (ſpiritual or eternal) but to the glory of God, and the good of our ſouls.

DIRECT. II. Let all who are viſited with ſickneſs and diſtreſs, ſearch for the Achan in the camp, and enquire diligently what is the ground and cauſe of God's controverſy with them.

IT hath been the practice of God's people, in ſcripture-times, to enquire into the cauſe and meaning of God's rods which have been laid upon them. So David, 2 Sam. xxi. When the land of Iſrael was three years under the ſtroke of famine, he enquired into the meaning of it. So Job is exceedingly deſirous to know why God ſet him up as a mark for his arrows, Job vii. 20. And hence it is that he makes that petition, Job x. 2. which is moſt ſuitable for every man in diſtreſs, "Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me."

I grant, indeed, that God ſometimes viſits his people with affliction, for the trial and exerciſe of their grace, and for their ſpiritual inſtruction, more than for the correction of their ſin. But, ſin being the original and foundation of all affliction, it is ſafeſt, when it is our own caſe, and moſt acceptable to God, to look on ſin as the procuring cauſe. Or, if our ſins have not immediately procured the preſent affliction, yet the beſt of God's children muſt own, that they have at leaſt deſerved it. We ſee the ſin of the Corinthians is mentioned as the cauſe of their ſickneſs, 1 Cor. xi. 30. "For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you." The Pſalmiſt concludes the very ſame thing, Pſ. cvii. 17, 18. "Fools, becauſe of their tranſgreſſions and their iniquities, are afflicted; their ſoul abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw nigh unto the gates of death." But ordinarily by

ſickneſs

ſickneſs the Lord points at ſome one ſin in us more than another; ſome Jonah in the ſhip that hath raiſed the ſtorm, which the Lord would have us to ſearch out, and throw over-board without delay.

Q. But how ſhall we diſcover and find out the particular ſin for which God afflicts us with ſickneſs and diſtreſs?

Anſ. 1. Study the Lord's word, and the chaſtiſements there recorded, which he hath inflicted upon people for their ſins; and enquire if you be guilty of the like. Obſerve what hath been God's mind to his people, and what ſin he hath pointed out to them when they have been brought under ſuch a rod, and ſo you may learn his mind to you, Rom. xv. 4. "For whatſoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning."

2. Conſider what is the ſin which conſcience doth moſt of all accuſe thee for, in thy moſt ſerious and ſolitary hours. Conſcience is God's deputy, and thy boſom-monitor, whoſe voice perhaps thou haſt little regarded in the day of thy health; wherefore God hath ſent a ſharper meſſenger to ſecond the voice of conſcience. Hear now the voice of the rod, for it is the ſame with the voice of conſcience. In the day of proſperity, carnal profits and pleaſures made ſuch a noiſe, that the voice of conſcience could not be heard; wherefore God hath brought on thee the ſilent night of adverſity, that his deputy may obtain audience. Well then, give ear; What ſaith conſcience now? may you not hear it ſaying, as Reuben to his brethren in diſtreſs, ſpake I not to you in the day of health, do not commit ſuch a ſin, and do not delay repenting for ſuch a ſin, but you would not hear? O man, let conſcience get a hearing at laſt as it got with the Patriarchs when they were brought to diſtreſs in Egypt, and made them confeſs their ſins in ſelling of Joſeph, Gen. xlii. 21. "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we ſaw the anguiſh of his ſoul, when he beſought us, and we would not hear him: therefore is this diſtreſs come upon us."

3. Conſider what are thoſe evils that others have obſerved in you, whether they be friends or foes; hear-

ken to what a Chriſtian friend noticeth in you, either when ſpeaking to you, or to others about you, "Let the righteous ſmite me," ſaith David, "and it ſhall be a kindneſs" Yea, do not diſregard what even enemies ſay of you: as David got good by the malicious reproaches of Shimei, in the day of his affliction, ſo may you in the time of diſtreſs; for ſometimes malice itſelf will ſpeak truth. Enemies are ſharp-ſighted to ſpy out our faults, and ſo may, through the divine bleſſing, prove monitors to us, both with reſpect to ſin and duty.

4. Conſider the nature and circumſtances of thy diſtreſs. Oft times the affliction is ſo ſuitable to the tranſgreſſion, that we may clearly read our ſin written on the forehead of our puniſhment, as in the caſe of Adonibezek, and many others. And alſo you may be helped to find it out by the Lord's timing of the rod to you; was it ſent when you was under much formality in duty; or when you was eagerly purſuing the things of the world; or when you was under the power of ſome prevailing luſt or other? then the rod comes to reprove you, and awake you to ſee the evil thereof.

5. Conſider what is the ſin that hath been formerly moſt affrighting to thy thoughts, and perplexing to thy conſcience, when thou haſt been in the immediate view of death and a tribunal. It is very likely (if thou haſt not truly repented of it) that is the ſin which God now intends to awake thee to ſee the evil of, that thou mayeſt ſincerely mourn for and turn from it, looking to God in Chriſt, for pardon and mercy.

Object. "Ah! (ſaith one) it is my lot to lie under a dumb and ſilent rod, I do not underſtand its language, I cannot hear its voice, I cannot find out the ſin that is pointed at by it; what courſe ſhall I take?

Anſ. 1. Be deeply humbled under this trial, and bewail thy caſe before the Lord; for it very much aggravates the affliction to God's people, when they know not the language of it; hence was it that Job lamented ſo heavily, that his way was hid, and he knew not the reaſon of God's contending with him, Job iii. 23.

2. A believer's caſe may be ſometimes ſo dark, that it requires a good deal of ſpiritual art and wiſdom to enable

nable him to hear the voice of the rod, and underſtand its language. Hence it is ſaid, "He is a man of wiſdom that ſeeth God's name upon it," Mic. vi. 9. Now, this wiſdom muſt only come from above: Therefore,

3. Go to God, and earneſtly beg for this wiſdom, that you may know his mind, and the meaning of the rod. Do as Rebekah, when the children ſtruggled in her womb; ſhe went to enquire of the Lord, ſaying, "Why am I thus?" Gen. xxxvv. 22. Cry to God to give you his Spirit to teach and enlighten you to ſee ſin in its evil, and the particular evils you are guilty of. This was Job's courſe in his affliction; "Shew me," ſays he, "wherefore thou contendeſt with me. That which I ſee not teach thou me. Make me to know my tranſgreſſion and my ſin." There is no better way for a priſoner to know the reaſon of his confinement, than to aſk the magiſtrate that committed him. God is a wiſe agent, and can give the beſt account of his own actions.

4. If thou canſt not find out the particular ſin for which God afflicts thee, then labour to repent of every known ſin, and cry for pardon of every unknown and forgotten ſin alſo. Do that out of wiſdom, which Herod did out of malice; who, becauſe he could not find out the babe Jeſus, killed all the children of Bethlehem, that he might be ſure to kill Jeſus among them. Let us ſeek the utter ruin and death of all our ſins, that we may be ſure to deſtroy that ſin for which God afflicts us.

5. Study to exerciſe a ſtrong faith, and a humble ſubmiſſion, while God keeps you under the ſilent rod. Believe firmly that God is moſt juſt, though you know not for what he contends. And, however long he thinks fit to make you walk in the dark, reſolve humbly to wait on him, and commit yourſelf to him, who has many times guided the blind in the way they knew not.

DIRECT. III. When any fit of Sickneſs attacks you, think ſeriouſly upon Death, and make diligent preparations for it.

I DO not mean that any man may delay the work of preparation for death, till ſickneſs cometh: No, no; this ſhould be the great and uptaking buſineſs of every man in the time of his health and ſtrength. But ſickneſs and diſeaſes being the harbingers of death, and meſſengers ſent from God to warn us of its coming; every man is thereby called to renew the work of preparing for death with all earneſtneſs and application. God's voice by every fit of ſickneſs is that in Deut. xxxii. 29. "O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end!" God knows our folly, and readineſs to forget this great work in the day of health; and therefore in his mercy he ſends ſickneſs and affliction, to teach us ſo to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to this piece of heavenly wiſdom, of making preparation for death.

And here I ſhall drop, 1. Some motives to preſs it. 2. Advices for the doing it right.

I. For motives, conſider theſe things:

1. Conſider God's mercy and patience towards you, in giving you ſo many warnings, and ſo many years to prepare for death; and in ſending his meſſengers and warnings ſo gently and gradually, to excite you to this work; when many younger and ſtronger than you are hurried into eternity, and little or no time given them to think where they are going. Have you not been ſpared many years in the midſt of dangers, when you have ſeen that bold archer, Death, ſhooting his arrows, and killing thouſands of your neighbours and friends round about you? Sometimes the arrow hath glanced over your head, and ſlain ſome great man your ſuperior; ſometimes it hath lighted at your feet, and cut off a child or ſervant, your inferiors; ſometimes it hath gone by on your left hand, and killed your enemy; at other times it hath paſſed on your right hand, and killed your near relations. So that you have ſeen friends and

and foes, ſuperiors and inferiors, relations and ſtrangers, dropping down dead round about you; and all this for a long tract of time, to give you warning to prepare for death. O let the goodneſs and forbearance of God towards you lead you to repentance, and perſuade you to fly ſpeedily to Chriſt for refuge and protection from wrath!

2dly, Conſider how terrible death will be, if it meets you in an unprepared ſtate, in a Chriſtleſs and impenitent condition. What a fearful change will it bring upon you? A change from earth to hell, from hope to deſpair, from pleaſure to pain, from comforts to terrors; a change from the offers of grace to the revelation of wrath; a change from probabilities to utter impoſſibilities of ſalvation. Death will cut off all your hopes and expectations of mercy for ever, Job xxviii. 3. There is no coming back to amend what hath been done amiſs here; and there is no work nor device in the grave whither you go. As the tree falls, ſo it will lie through all eternity.

II. I come to give ſome advices, in order to the right preparation for death. 1*ſt*, Set about ſelf-examination work. Enquire if you be in Chriſt or not; if you be yet far off from God, or if you be brought near by the blood of Chriſt. And ſee that you be impartial in this ſearch, and willing to find out the truth in this important queſtion. Be not fooliſhly tender of yourſelf, and apt to believe that you are ſafe, when it is not ſo; for this way thouſands do ruin themſelves. But be content to know the worſt of your caſe, and thoroughly to underſtand your ſoul's danger, that you may be moved to take the right way to eſcape it. Wherefore take a view of the mark of Chriſtleſs and unconverted perſons ſet down in God's word, and judge yourſelf by them: and conſider alſo the deſigns of true grace there recorded, and ſee if they be applicable to you or not.

2dly, If, after enquiry, you find your ſtate is bad, that you have been a lover of the world more than of God, you have minded your body more than your ſoul, you have lived in the neglect of precious Chriſt, allowed yourſelf in known ſin; O then be convinced

of

of your inability to help yourſelf, and of your need of Chriſt to help you. And labour to be deeply humbled before God under a ſenſe of your ſin and folly, "Ah, how fooliſhly, how rebelliouſly, how unthankfully have I carried! I have abuſed God's mercies, and left undone the work for which I was made, preſerved, and enjoyed the goſpel. Oh! I had all my by-paſt time given me to make preparation for endleſs eternity, and I have never minded it, till now that ſickneſs, the harbinger of death, is come upon me. And now what ſhall I do to be ſaved?" Well, then, in order to convince and humble you the more, caſt back your eyes upon the ſins of your nature, and of your by-paſt life; view them in their nature, number, aggravations, and deſerts. O, do not ſo many years ſins need a very deep humiliation? O, do you not ſtand greatly in need of ſuch a perſon as Chriſt, to be your Saviour and Ranſomer from ſuch a vaſt number of ſins? O but their weight will preſs you eternally down to the loweſt hell, if left to yourſelf, and laid upon your back.

3. O ſinner, art thou deeply humbled, and deſirous of mercy upon any terms? Believe, then, that thy caſe is not remedileſs, but that there is a ſacrifice provided for your ſins, and an able and all ſufficient Saviour in your offer. Believe that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God, and become fleſh to be a ſurety for you, that he is both able and willing to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come unto God by him. Though your ſins, your dangers, and your fears, were never ſo great, yet he is able and willing to ſave. O flee preſently to this refuge-city, whoſe gates are open to receive you. Truſt your ſouls upon Chriſt's ſacrifice and meritorious blood for mercy and ſalvation. Apply humbly to him, that he may teach you the will of God, reconcile you to his Father, pardon your ſins, renew you by his Spirit, and ſave you from eternal wrath.

4. Give up yourſelves to God in Chriſt, by way of covenant and ſolemn reſignation. Every man doth this ſacramentally in baptiſm; but you muſt alſo renew it perſonally and explicitly, and thereby give a cordial

and

and voluntary conſent to the covenant of grace. Acquieſce cheerfully in the goſpel way of ſalvation through Chriſt and his righteouſneſs; and accept of God, in Chriſt, as thy portion. Make choice of God the Father, as thy reconciled Father in Chriſt; and God the Son as thy Redeemer and Saviour; and God the Holy Ghoſt for thy ſanctifier, guide, and comforter. And likewiſe give up thyſelf, ſoul and body, and all thou haſt, to be the Lord's; engaging in Chriſt's ſtrength to live for God, and walk with him in newneſs of life. And ſtudy to do all this deliberately, unfeignedly, and cheerfully. Though, perhaps, you have done this hypocritically at former times, you have profaned God's covenant, and behaved unſtedfaſtly and perfidiouſly therein; yet now endeavour to be ſincere with God for once.

5. Be living daily in the exerciſe of faith and repentance; renew the acts thereof frequently, in proportion to your renewed ſins and guiltineſs, cleave cloſe to glorious Chriſt your high-prieſt and ſurety, and be ever waſhing in his blood. As long as you are in the world, you have need to waſh your feet, John xiii. 10. Come death when it will, let it find you at the fountain, always looking to and making uſe of Jeſus Chriſt. You have great need of Chriſt every day of your life, more eſpecially in ſickneſs; but moſt of all at a dying hour. O what need will you have of Chriſt then as an advocate with God, when the queſtion is to be determined, where your manſion is to be aſſigned through all eternity, Whether in heaven or hell? O then be looking always to Chriſt with the eye of faith. Live in the conſtant thoughts of this bleſſed Mediator. Let him be firſt in your thoughts in the morning, and laſt in your thoughts at night.

6. Be ſtriving to mortify every ſin and luſt, both outward and inward. By dying to ſin daily, that ſo you may not die for ſin eternally. O that ſin may be daily loſing its ſtrength, and dying in you! ſo that it may be certainly dead before you. Pray earneſtly, that all your ſins may die before you die: for if they die

not

not before you, but outlive the dying body, they will live eternally to ſting and torment the never-dying ſoul.

DIRECT. IV. Be not anxious for recovery to health; but leave the iſſue of the preſent ſickneſs to the will and pleaſure of the infinitely wiſe God.

REMEMBER, O man, that thou art the clay, and God is the Potter; he is abſolute Lord of thy life and times, therefore learn to adore his ſovereignty over thee and all thy enjoyments. David doth ſo, when he ſays, "Lord, my times are in thy hand," Pſ. xxxi. 15. And indeed they are only beſt in his hand, for he beſt knows how to diſpoſe of them. The prophet ſaith, Iſa. xxx. 18. "The Lord is a God of judgment, bleſſed are all they that wait for him." Judgment there ſignifies wiſdom, the Lord is a God of wiſdom, and will order and time all things well; and therefore it becomes us quietly to wait for his pleaſure, ſaying, "the will of the Lord be done:" It is taken notice of, as a great ſin in the Iſraelites, that they waited not for his counſel, but limited the Holy One of Iſrael, Pſal. lxxviii. 14. What unaccountable folly and preſumption is it for worms of the earth to ſeek to ſtint and limit the Sovereign of heaven to their meaſures! It becomes us at all times, and eſpecially in ſickneſs and affliction, to have low ſubmiſſive thoughts of ourſelves, and high exalted thoughts of God's ſovereignty, ſuch as Nebuchadnezzar had, Dan. iv. 35. "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can ſtay his hand, or ſay unto him, what doſt thou." We ſhould therefore refer all to his wiſe determination, and be willing to die or live, as he ſhall be pleaſed to appoint. I remember I have read of a godly woman, who in her ſickneſs being aſked by one, Whether ſhe was moſt deſirous to die or live? She anſwered, I have no choice in that matter, but refer myſelf unto the will of God. But, ſaid the other, ſuppoſe God ſhould refer it unto you, whether to die or live, which of them would

would you chuſe? If God (replied ſhe) ſhould refer it to me, I would even refer it back again to him. It becomes thee, O man, to be entirely reſigned to the will of thy Maſter, and to ſtand like a centinel in thy ſtation, ready to move as thy great general and commander ſhall give orders concerning thee. It would be pleaſant and acceptable to God, to ſee thee more deſirous to be delivered from ſin than from ſickneſs. O, but ſin is a far worſe diſeaſe than any ſickneſs in the world! Beg importunately, that the great Phyſician may cure this woful ſoul-diſeaſe, and let him do with the body what he pleaſeth. This was David's practice in his affliction, Pſal: xxv. 18. "Look upon my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my ſins." As for his pains and afflictions, he aſks no more but that God would regard them, and look upon them, and do with them as he thought fit; but, as for his ſins, no leſs will ſatisfy him than a pardon, and blotting them entirely out, ſo as they might be remembered no more.

DIRECT. V. Bind yourſelf with holy purpoſes and reſolutions in Chriſt's ſtrength, to be more watchful againſt ſin, more diligent in duty, and to improve the time of health better, if God ſhall be pleaſed to reſtore it again to you.

WHEN God is viſiting your iniquities with rods, and pleading a controverſy with you for your omiſſions and ſlackneſs in duty, he expects that you will return from your backſlidings, and ſet about a ſerious reformation and change of life, Hoſ. v. 15. "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and ſeek my face; in their affliction they will ſeek me early." See then that you open your ear to diſcipline; ſtudy to anſwer God's call and expectation, and in his ſtrength reſolve to enter upon a new life. "Surely now it is meet to be ſaid unto God, I have borne chaſtiſement, I will not offend any more. That which I ſee not, teach thou me: If I have done iniquity, I will do ſo no more."

Job xxxiv. 31, 32. Now is the ſeaſon, you ſhould ſay with Ephraim, Hoſ. xiv. 8. "What have I to do any more with idols?"

Having duly examined yourſelves, and ſearched out your ſins, you ought to put a bill of divorce into each of their hands. Deliberately reſolve againſt all your ſins, whether ſecret or open; and eſpecially reſolve againſt your darling and beloved ſins, thoſe ſins which do moſt eaſily beſet you. Reſolve alſo againſt all temptations to ſin; and, particularly, againſt the ſnares of bad company, whereby you have been formerly enticed; now ſay with David, Pſ. cxix. 115. "Depart from me, ye evil-doers; for I will keep the commandments of my God." You muſt not only purpoſe to forſake all ſin, but alſo mind every known duty; that you will make religion your one thing needful; the pleaſing of God, the chief buſineſs of your life; that you will ſet the Lord alway before you, give him your heart in all duties, aim at nearneſs and communion with God in every one of them; and ſtill preſs forward to the full enjoyment of God in heaven through eternity.

Reſolve alſo, through grace, that you will, in a ſpecial manner, mind ſecret duties, which the eyes of men do not obſerve, and thoſe duties which conſcience doth moſt challenge you for neglecting. And you that are heads of families, reſolve to make more conſcience of family-religion, of worſhipping God with your families, both morning and evening; inſtructing your children and ſervants in the knowledge of Chriſt; and recommending religion and godlineſs to all round about you, whether relations or ſtrangers.

And, if you would have your reſolutions effectual, ſee that they be accompanied with a deep ſenſe of your inſufficiency to perform them in your own ſtrength. Bear always in mind the corruption and deceitfulneſs of your own heart; and make all your reſolutions in a humble dependence on the ſufficiency of Jeſus Chriſt your ſurety. Obſerve the apoſtle Paul's advice to his ſon Timothy, 2 Tim. ii. 1. "Be ſtrong in the grace that is in Jeſus Chriſt." All your ſtock, O believer, is in his hand, ſo that without him you can do nothing; but

but, through Chriſt ſtrengthening you, thou art able to do all things.

DIRECT. VI. Set your houſe in order, by making your latter-wills, and ſettling your domeſtic and ſecular affairs, while you have freedom and capacity for doing it.

AFTER the heart is ſet in order, the next work is to ſet your houſe in order, according to God's counſel to Hezekiah, Iſa. xxxviii. 1. It is recorded of the Patriarch Abraham, that he was careful to ſettle the affairs of his family before his death, Gen. xxv. 5, 6. He diſpoſed of his eſtate to Iſaac, and legacies to the ſons of his concubines. It is too general a fault, that men delay and put off making their wills, as they do their repentance, to the very laſt, and ſo too frequently never make them at all. Conſider the evil of deferring or neglecting this neceſſary affair; for if you, upon whom God hath beſtowed means, ſhould die inteſtate, your eſtate may deſcend otherwiſe than you intended; much of it may be ſpent in tedious and expenſive law-ſuits; ſuch differences may fall out among relations, that ſhould live in friendſhip and mutual affection, as cannot be healed; ſome of them may be reduced to extreme want, when a ſmall legacy might have put them in a way of living; and many ſuch inconveniences may follow. Well, then, if your neglect ſhould bring on theſe evils, and involve poſterity into endleſs ſtrifes and contentions, may you not juſtly fear that the guilt thereof will purſue you into another world, whoſe wretched careleſsneſs was the occaſion of all that miſchief?

Pray, what is the reaſon that men put off this affair? Is it not becauſe they do not incline to think ſo ſeriouſly on death, as this will occaſion them to do? Doth not this ſmell of abominable earthly-mindedneſs, ſpeak as if a man deſired all his portion in this life, and cared not for a better? and that he is ſo far from preparing for death, that he cannot endure to think of it? Alas, that

this worldly diſpoſition ſhould ſo far prevail among us! But ſurely there is no wiſe man will ſay, that the putting off the thoughts of death, will keep death at the greater diſtance; or, that preparing for death, and making our wills, will bring on death the ſooner.

It were ſurely beſt to order our affairs timeouſly; yea, do it in time of health, rather than to delay unto a ſick-bed, or a death-bed; for either you may be ſnatched off ſuddenly, and have no time for it; or you may be taken with ſuch a diſtemper as ſhall ſeize your tongue, ſo as you cannot expreſs your mind; or ſeize your underſtanding, ſo as you cannot rationally diſpoſe of your effects. And though none of thoſe ſhould happen, yet, certainly it proves a great diſturbance to a dying man, to be caſting up, ordering, and ſettling the affairs of his family, when he ſhould be ſecuring a heavenly manſion for his ſoul, and clearing up his evidences thereunto. It is great wiſdom to put this affair by hand, that you may have as little to do with the world as may be, and all occaſions of diſtraction to your immortal ſoul may be prevented, when it is near to its flitting into an eternal and unchangeable ſtate.

Moreover, in ſettling your ſecular affairs, obſerve theſe following advices: 1. Make your wills cheerfully, and freely lay down whatever you enjoy, when God calls you to do it. Praiſe God that you had thoſe things while you needed them, and, when you have no longer uſe for them, leave them without repining to thoſe that come after you. Look not back to Egypt when you are upon your march to Canaan.

2. See that you deal juſtly, in providing your family, paying all your juſt debts, and making reſtitution, if you have wronged any. Abhor all deſigns of defrauding any of your lawful creditors; for, if your laſt act ſhould be unjuſt, you leave a blot upon your name here; and ſince you cannot repent of this wickedneſs, it being among your laſt deeds, you expoſe yourſelf to a fearful doom in the world whither you are going.

3. In ſettling your eſtates, ſee that God and good uſes be not forgot nor left out. When you are leaving the world, and can glorify God no longer here by your words

words or actions, ſee to honour the Lord with your ſubſtance, by leaving ſome part thereof to a pious and charitable uſe. I know, it is a work of charity to give for maintaining the bodies of the poor; and eſpecially the poor of God's people, who belong to his family: But it is much more pious and charitable to leave ſomewhat for propagating Chriſtian knowledge in dark places; for educating poor children to read the ſcriptures; and inſtructing ignorant ſouls in the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt. It is much to be lamented, that ſo many rich men among us die, and leave nothing to ſuch pious uſes. The liberality of Papiſts, on their death-beds, may give a ſharp challenge to many profeſſed Proteſtants: O what a ſhame is it to the profeſſors of the doctrine of grace, that the falſe doctrines of merits and purgatory, ſhould produce ſo many donations and mortifications among the Papiſts; and the faith of Chriſt's moſt glorious goſpel ſhould not do the like among true believers! Shall the proud conceit of merit, and the imaginary fear of purgatory, prompt men to do more this way, than the certain perſuaſion of the love of God in Chriſt, and the well grounded-hope of eternal life through the alone merits of Jeſus Chriſt: O what a reproach is this to our holy religion!

4. It might be much to the glory of God, and good of ſouls, that a great part of our teſtaments and latter-wills ſhould conſiſt of ſolemn charges, exhortations and bleſſings, to our children, or thoſe to whom we bequeath any legacy; ſo as they can never open our teſtaments, or look into them, but they might hear ſomething that may make impreſſions on their ſouls for their ſpiritual edification, and for quickening them to the diligent practice of both family and perſonal godlineſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Containing ſome Particular Directions to thoſe who are ſharply afflicted with Sickneſs and long Trouble.

DIRECT. I. Juſtify God in the greateſt Afflictions which befal you.

THOUGH God ſhould condemn you, ſee that you acquit him, and ſay, he is righteous in all his dealings. When the church was under the heavieſt diſtreſs, ſhe finds cauſe to juſtify God, Lam. i. 18. "The Lord is righteous, for I have rebelled againſt his commandment." So doth godly Nehemiah, Neh. ix. 33. "Howbeit thou art juſt in all that is brought upon us: for thou haſt done right, but we have done wickedly." The ſame doth holy David acknowledge, Pſal. cxix. 75. "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that in faithfulneſs thou haſt afflicted me." Now, in order to bring you to this agreeable frame, and to convince you of the equity and juſtice of God, in his diſpenſations, however heavy and long your diſtreſs be, I ſhall lay before you the following conſiderations:

1. Conſider the infinitely holy and righteous nature of that God who ſmiteth thee, Pſal. cxix. 137. "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments." We preſume it of a righteous man that he will do righteous things; and ſhall we not much more believe ſo of a holy and righteous God? We cannot be infallibly certain that a righteous man will always do ſo: For a righteous man may leave his righteouſneſs, becauſe the creature is mutable; but God is immutably righteous; ſo that we may be confident of it, that the judge of all the earth will do right, for it is impoſſible he can do otherwiſe, Zech. iii. 5. "The juſt Lord is in the midſt thereof, he will not do iniquity." He will not, he cannot; for it is contrary to his nature.

2. Conſider

2. Conſider that God never brings on any affliction without a cauſe, 1 Cor. xi. 30. "For this cauſe many are ſick." He hath ſtill juſt ground for the heavieſt affliction, from thy ſins and provocations; and may always ſay to thee, as to Iſrael, Jer. ii. 17, 19. "Haſt thou not procured this unto thyſelf, in that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way? Thine own wickedneſs ſhall correct thee, and thy backſliding ſhall reprove thee: know, therefore, and ſee, that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou haſt forſaken the Lord." There is ſtill ground enough for affliction to be found in the beſt of God's people; and therefore it is ſaid, Lam. iii. 33. "For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." No: it is our ſins that oblige him to it. As Chriſt whipped the ſellers of oxen and ſheep out of the temple with a whip (as is generally thought) made of their own cords; ſo God never ſcourgeth us but with a whip made of our own ſins, Prov. v. 22. "His own iniquities ſhall take the wicked himſelf, and he ſhall be holden with the cords of his ſins." If we conſider the mighty God as a Lord diſpenſing grace, then we find he acts ſovereignly, and according to his will and pleaſure, Mat. xi. 26. "Even ſo Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight." But if we conſider him as a judge, diſpenſing judgments, he never doth it without a foregoing cauſe on the creature's part. God's treaſure of mercy is always full, and ready to be let out to them that ſeek it; but his treaſure of wrath is empty till men fill it up by their ſins, Rom. ii. 15. "Thou treaſureſt up to thyſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath:" We always do provide fuel for God's wrath, before it kindle and break out upon us.

3. Conſider further this inſtance of God's equity; that when there is a cauſe given, God doth not preſently take it, but continues to threaten often and warn long, before he executes the ſentence of his word. He ſends leſſer ſtrokes as warnings of greater, if we repent not; and he repeats his warnings many times, both by his word and providence, before he ſmite. Yea, even when repeated warnings are ſlighted, he delays a long time, and waits to be gracious, Iſa. xxx. 18. And when men's obſtinacy and incorrigibleneſs arrive to ſuch a height,

that

that he can ſpare no longer; yet, how loth is he to give them up to ſevere judgment! Hoſ. xi. 8. "How ſhall I give thee up, Ephraim? how ſhall I deliver thee, Iſrael? how ſhall I make thee as Admah? how ſhall I ſet thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." When the Lord hath ſinners in his arms, ready to give them up to ſevere judgments, yet he makes a ſtand, and would be willingly prevented before he proceeds to this ſtrange work; for ſo he calls his acts of judgment, Iſa. xxviii. 21. Acts of mercy are co-natural, moſt agreeable and pleaſant to God, Mic. vii. 18. "He delighteth in mercy: but judgment is his ſtrange act, and his ſtrange work."

4. Conſider that when at laſt he ſends ſtrokes on us, they are always ſhort of the cauſe; he exacts not the whole debt that ſinners owe to his juſtice, as Ezra doth acknowledge, Ezra ix. 13. "Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve." The ſtroke he there is ſpeaking of, was a moſt heavy judgment; fearful ruin and deſolation came upon Jeruſalem, and the whole of Judah; the city and temple were burnt to aſhes, the people carried captive to a ſtrange land, and treated as bond-ſlaves among the Heathen. Yet, ſaith the holy man, "Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve." *q.d.* It is true we have been carried to Babylon; but, in juſtice, we might have been ſent to hell: our houſes were burned, but our bodies might have been burned too: we have been drinking water, but we might have been drinking blood: we have had grievous burdens on earth, but we might have been groaning in hell: we were baniſhed from the temple, but we might have been eternally baniſhed from God's preſence. We think it a great favour among men, when any puniſhment is mitigated, when the ſentence of death is changed into baniſhment, or when baniſhment is turned into a fine, or a great fine into a ſmaller: And will you think that God deals ſeverely or rigorouſly with you, when he lays you on a ſick-bed, when he might juſtly have laid you in hell, and poured out all his wrath upon you there? You but taſte of the brim of the cup, when God might cauſe you to drink of the bottom and dregs thereof.

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Have you not cauſe then to acknowledge God's juſtice; nay, even his mercy, too, in his dealings with you, however rough they may ſeem to be! May you not, with good reaſon, ſay, any thing leſs than hell is a mercy to ſuch an ill deſerving creature as I am! If even a hard-hearted Pharaoh, under diſtreſs, came the length to own the juſtice of God, Exod. ix. 27. "I have ſinned, the Lord is righteous." Shall any profeſſed Chriſtian fall ſhort of that obſtinate Egyptian?

DIRECT. II. Labour ſtill to be ſenſible of God's hand under heavy Affliction, and beware of ſtupidity and unconcernedneſs under it.

IT is a ſin to faint under heavy affliction, but it is a duty to feel it, Heb. xii. 5. "My ſon, deſpiſe not the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him." The apoſtle there doth caution againſt two extremes, which every Chriſtian under the rod ſhould be careful to avoid: 1. Deſpiſing or making light of affliction. 2. Sinking or deſponding under affliction. We are in great hazard of running into the one or the other. As to the firſt, we may be ſaid to deſpiſe the chaſtening of the Lord, when we do not obſerve God's hand in our affliction, ſo as to reform the things whereby he is diſpleaſed; or, when we reſolve to abide the trial, by the ſtrength of our own reſolutions and ſtoutheartedneſs, without looking to God for ſupporting grace; or, when we turn ſtupid and inſenſible under the heavy and long continued rod. This deſpiſing and ſlighting of the rod, is not patience, but ſtupidity; it is not Chriſtian magnanimity, but a ſtoical temper of mind, moſt ſinful and provoking to God. We ſee how angry God is with ſinners when his ſtrokes are not felt, Iſ. xli. 25. "He hath poured upon him the fury of his anger; and it hath ſet him on fire round about, yet he knew it not; and it hath burned him, yet he laid it not to heart," Jer. v. 3. "Thou haſt ſtriken them, but they have not grieved: Thou haſt conſumed them, but they have refuſed to receive correction; they have made

their faces harder than a rock, they have refuſed to r
turn." There is little hope of a ſcholar's minding l
leſſon, that is regardleſs of whipping. It is a dreadf
ſign to be like Pharaoh, ſleeping in our ſins, when G
is thundering in his wrath. He that will ſleep wh
his houſe is on fire, or lie ſtill in bed, as if he was n
concerned, may aſſuredly expect to be conſumed in
flames. As David could not bear it, when the meſſe
gers he ſent to the Ammonites out of good will, we
affronted and deſpiſed; ſo neither God will endure
when the meſſengers he ſends to ſinners are ſlighte
for he that ſlights a meſſenger, affronts his maſter. The
who make light of affliction, make light of God th
ſends it, and make light of ſin that procures it.

Queſt. "But when is it that people are ſuitably co
cerned under a heavy rod?"

Anſ. When they ſee God's hand, hear God's voi
anſwer his intent, are curious to know his mind, c
ſirous to do thoſe things he requires, and reform the
things he is diſpleaſed with. Remember every affli
tion is a meſſenger from God, and deſerves a heari
from you. It comes to thee with ſuch a meſſage
Ehud did to Eglon, Judges iii. 20. "I have an erra
from God to thee, O King;" I have a meſſage fro
God to thee, O Chriſtian, O ſinner. Well, lend
ear, and hearken with reverence and attention to th
errand; ſay, "Speak, Lord, for thy ſervant hearet
what wouldſt thou have me to do?" Believe it, th
God ſpeaks as really to you by his rod, as by his wor
therefore he ſays, hear ye the rod. God ſpoke as tru
by his ten plagues to Egypt, as he did by his ten pr
cepts to Iſrael. And if the calm voice of the word we
more regarded, we ſhould hear leſs of the rough voi
of the rod. As Gideon took briers and thorns of th
wilderneſs, and with them taught the men of Succot
who would not be taught by fairer means, Judg. viii. 1
So God takes the ſharp prickles of ſore affliction,
teach you his ſtatutes, when you will not be taught b
ſofter methods. Beware then of grieving God's Spir
by turning ſtupid, and inſenſible under ſharp or lo
continued trials: But the more pains God is at wi

y

you by his rod, hearken the more carefully to his voice, and labour to make the greater proficiency in the ſchool of affliction, where he thinks fit to continue you; that ſo you may inherit that bleſſing, Pſ. xciv. 12. "Bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſteneſt, O Lord, and teacheſt him out of thy law."

DIRECT. III. Beware of miſconſtructing God's dealings towards you, and of charging him fooliſhly.

WE are apt to believe ſatan's ſuggeſtions under heavy trials, and to entertain wrong thoughts of God and his diſpenſations. Now, theſe you ought to guard againſt, as, for inſtance, 1. Beware of harbouring atheiſtical thoughts, as if there were no Providence, no wiſe Governor of this lower world, no diſtinction between the good and bad; and that it is to no purpoſe to be religious, like thoſe mentioned in Mal. iii. 14. "Ye have ſaid, it is vain to ſerve God; and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinance, and walked mournfully before the Lord of hoſts?" Yea, even the Pſalmiſt, when he begins to compare his own ſharp trials with the wicked's eaſe and proſperity, is tempted to think all religion is in vain, and ſay, Pſ. lxxiii. 13, 14. "Verily, I have cleanſed my heart in vain, and waſhed my hands in innocence. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chaſtened every morning." But theſe are nothing but the helliſh ſuggeſtions of ſatan, that irreconcileable enemy of God and precious ſouls, againſt which we ſhould cloſely ſtop our ears.

2. Beware of charging God in your hearts, with rigour and injuſtice in his dealings, like thoſe, Ezek. xviii. 25. "Yet, ye ſay, the way of the Lord is not equal." How highly unjuſt, and injurious, are ſuch thoughts of him who is the judge of all the earth, and cannot but do right?

3. Beware of thinking that heavy afflictions do always ſpeak wrath in God againſt thee. No, ſometimes they ſpeak forth love, and God may be carrying on a love-deſign thereby to thy ſoul, viz. to ſubdue thy ſtrong

luſts, and draw thee nearer unto himſelf. As for thoſe who think that the ſmarting rod, and Divine love, cannot dwell together, let them read that paſſage, Heb. xii. 5, 6. "And ye have forgotten the exhortation, which ſpeaketh unto you as unto children, my ſon, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth."

4. Beware of deſponding and diſtruſtful thoughts of God under ſharp afflictions. Some are ready to raze the foundation; quit their intereſt in God, and the promiſes; and caſt away their hope and confidence, ſaying, with Gideon, Judg. vi. 13. "Oh, my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this evil befallen us?" So David was ready to draw a haſty concluſion, Pſ. xxxi. 22. "I ſaid, in my haſte, I am cut off from before thine eyes." But this was the effect of unbelief; for he that believeth will not make haſte.

DIRECT. IV. Under ſore Trouble and Diſtreſs, labour to exerciſe a ſtrong and lively Faith.

IT was a noble and heroic reſolution in that holy man Job, under his ſingular trials, Job xiii. 15. "Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him," *q. d.* Let my ſtrokes be never ſo ſore and heavy, yet, I will not let go my grips of his words and promiſes, I will not raze theſe foundations of my hope. It was this way the Pſalmiſt kept himſelf from ſinking under his heavy burdens, Pſ. xxvii. 13. "I had fainted, unleſs I had believed to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living." Conſider but a little the noble influence that faith hath to ſtrengthen and ſupport the ſoul under ſore trials.

1. Faith grips to the great goſpel-promiſes of ſalvation in and through Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo ſecures the ſoul's main intereſt through eternity; which is enough to make the ſoul eaſy in every lot.

2. Faith views God in Chriſt at the helm in the greateſt ſtorm, and ſo it endures, as ſeeing him who is inviſible, Heb. xi. 27.

3.

3. Faith caſts the ſoul's anchor upon the rock of ages, and ſtays itſelf on God and the faithful promiſes; whereby the ſoul is eaſed and diſburdened of its fears and melancholy apprehenſions, Pſal. iv. 22. Iſa. l. 10.

4. Faith brings new ſtrength and auxiliary ſupplies of grace from heaven, when the former ſupply is exhauſted and ſpent; whereof David had the ſweet experience, Pſal. xxvii. 13. As God doth plant and actuate grace in the ſoul, ſo he is pleaſed to come in with ſeaſonable ſupplies and reinforcements to the weak and decayed graces of his people, anſwerable to their preſent exigencies and preſſures; And thus he doth, from time to time, feed the believer's lamp with freſh oil, giving more faith, more love, more hope, and more deſires; and hereby he gives power to the faint, and ſtrengthens the things which remain when ready to die.

5. Faith keeps the ſoul from ſinking under heavy trials, by bringing in former experiences of the power, mercy, and faithfulneſs of God, to the afflicted ſoul. Hereby was the Pſalmiſt ſupported in diſtreſs, Pſal. xiii. 6. Pſal. lxxxvii. 4. O, ſaith faith, "Remember what God hath done both for thy outward and inward man; he hath not only delivered thy body when in trouble, but he hath done great things for thy ſoul; he hath brought thee out of a ſtate of black nature, entered into a covenant-relation with thee, made his goodneſs paſs before thee; he hath helped thee to pray, and many times hath heard thy prayers and thy tears. Hath he not formerly brought thee out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and put a new ſong in thy mouth, and made thee to reſolve never to give way to ſuch unbelieving doubts and fears again? And how unbecoming is it for thee now to ſink in trouble?"

6. Faith ſupports the ſoul, by giving it a pleaſant view and proſpect of a happy outgate from all trouble; when it ſhall be admitted to ſee and dwell with Chriſt hereafter. Thus was Job ſupported in his great diſtreſs, Job xix. 25, 26, 29. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth. Whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and mine

mine eyes ſhall behold," &c. A believing view of the ſoul's meeting with its Redeemer, and receiving a crown of glory from him at laſt, is an excellent ſupport to a Chriſtian under the heavieſt affliction; and ſo it was to Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

7. Faith gives great ſupport, by the encouraging repreſentations it makes of Chriſt, and of his preſent concern for the believer while under affliction. As for inſtance, 1. Faith repreſents Chriſt to a believer under trials, as ſympathizing with him under his diſtreſs, feeling his pain, hearing his groans, bearing his burdens, and ready to relieve him in his own appointed time, which it well becometh him to wait for.

2. Faith repreſents Chriſt as putting in his Almighty arm under the believer's head, and conveying inviſible ſtrength to ſupport and hold him up under his greateſt preſſures.

3. Faith repreſents Chriſt as pleading the afflicted believer's cauſe with God, and anſwering all the charges of the law, the challenges of conſcience, and accuſations of Satan againſt him.

4. Faith repreſents Chriſt as ſtanding by the furnace as a refiner where his gold is melting; carefully overſeeing the trials of his people, that they may work for their good; and ready to bring them out thereof, when they are ſufficiently purified from their droſs.

5. Faith repreſents Chriſt as ſmiling on his people under the croſs, whiſpering peace into their ears, and ſaying, "Well done, good and faithful ſervant."

DIRECT. V. Labour to bear with patience whatever load of trouble the Lord appoints for you.

WE will perhaps obſerve ſome, who are ſtrangers to religion, contentedly enduring very painful evils; and this they may do, by virtue of a natural hardineſs and reſolution which ſome are endued with; or, upon the account of arguments furniſhed with human prudence: This is only patience as a moral virtue, which ſome attain

attain to. But it is patience as a ſpiritual grace, or a fruit of the Spirit, which we muſt aim at under our trials; that we may bear them contentedly, from divine principles, to divine ends. Now, this grace of patience we muſt earneſtly beg from God under heavy afflictions, for it is only he that muſt work it in us; and therefore, he is called the God of patience, Rom. xv. 5. And, in order to your attaining of this grace, I ſhall lay before you the following conſiderations, which may be uſeful, through the Lord's bleſſing, for that end.

1. Conſider the patience of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, under ſufferings inexpreſſibly greater than yours. When it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him, and put him to grief; how patiently did he bear all? According to that remarkrble word, Iſa. liii. 7. "He was oppreſſed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth." Now, Chriſt ſuffered as an example of patience, though it was not his chief end: and ſurely all the members of the body ſhould ſtudy to imitate the head in patience. Did your bleſſed Saviour patiently endure ſuch agonies and preſſures of wrath for you; and will you decline to undergo ſome ſhort pains or ſickneſs, in obedience to his command?

2. Conſider God's ſovereignty over you. He is the great Potter, and you are his clay; and, why may he not do with you as he pleaſeth? If your children offend you, you ſcourge them, and perhaps do it ſometimes withou reaſon; yet how ill do you take it, when they refuſe to ſubmit? How will you drive and ſpur your horſes under you, and perhaps ſome times unreaſonably? Yet they bear all quietly, and make no reſiſtance. Shall they take blows from their maſter; and will you not from your maker, that has far more power over you? If any challenge you for cruelty to your children or beaſts, you take it not well, becauſe you think you may do what you will with your own, and no man hath right to quarrel you: But hath not God a greater property in you, than you in your children or cattle?

cattle? And will you not patiently ſubmit to your wife and abſolute Sovereign?

3. Conſider thy ſin as the meritorious cauſe of all thy afflictions, however heavy they be. If thou haſt right thoughts of thy ſins, and the aggravations thereof, thy mind may be compoſed to a patient ſubmiſſion to God's hand: If ſin be heavy on thee, all thy afflictions will be light. Luther gives us this as a reaſon why he ſlighted the rage of the Pope and the Emperor, and all his outward troubles: "They are all little to me, becauſe ſin is ſo weighty on me." Hence it was, that Paul complained not at all of his ſufferings, for as great as they were; but he cried out much of his ſins, Rom. vii. 23. "O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?" Senſe of ſin doth ſwallow up the ſenſe of affliction, as the ocean doth little brooks. For with whom ſhouldſt thou quarrel, but thyſelf, when thou bringeſt troubles on thyſelf? This conſideration ſhould bring thee to reſolve, and ſay with the prophet, Mic. vii. 9. "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him."

4. Conſider how ſharp ſoever the pains are, you are called to bear, yet they fall infinitely ſhort of what you have juſtly deſerved at God's hands. It is of his infinite mercy, that death and everlaſting deſtruction hath not been your portion long ſince; and that you are not now groaning under the extremity of his indignation in the bottomleſs pit, together with the devil and his angels. And, conſequently, whatever falls ſhort of this, is truly a great mercy, and is ſo far from being ground of quarrelling, that the greateſt ſufferer on this ſide hell, hath juſt cauſe to admire God's clemency in dealing more favourably with him than he hath deſerved.

5. Compare thy caſe with others that have been, or preſently are in diſtreſs. Do not ſay, there is none ſo hardly dealt with as thou art; for thou knoweſt not the affliction of others. Conſider duly the trials of that eminent ſaint, Job, in all the circumſtances thereof, and ſee if you can ſay, that your ſorrow is near ſo great

great as his ſorrow was. Again, compare your caſe with that of the damned in hell, who lie and fry in endleſs and ceaſeleſs flames, ſo that they have no reſt, day nor night, but the ſmoke of their torment aſcends for ever: And think what a bleſſing it is, that you are yet in a ſtate of ſalvation, and not delivered over to thoſe everlaſting burnings, which were the due demerits of your ſins, and to which you might long ago have been juſtly condemned, had it not been for the patience and long ſuffering of Almighty God, who waiteth to be gracious to guilty ſinners. When you conſider theſe things, inſtead of being diſſatisfied with the Divine diſpenſations, you have cauſe to bleſs God, that matters are not worſe with you; and that you are kept out of hell to this day, where thouſands, not more guilty than you, are preſently roaring in endleſs deſperation.

Unto theſe conſiderations, I ſhall ſubjoin ſome few helps, or advices, in order to the attaining of patience under ſore troubles. 1. Labour to get pardon of ſin, and peace with God, ſecured to thy ſoul, and this will enable you to bear the heavieſt croſs with patience. Hence it was that Luther cried, "Smite, Lord, as thou wilt, I take all in good part, ſeeing my ſins are pardoned: O, pardon of ſin is the crowning bleſſing, therefore I will bear any thing, I will ſwallow up quarrelling into admiring; I will welcome the pruning knife, ſeeing there is no fear of the bloody axe to fell me down."

2. Labour to ſee God's hand in thy affliction. Do not, like the dog, ſnarl at the ſtone, but look up to the hand that throws it. And, ſurely, a view of the hand of a holy God, may ſerve to calm all the boiſterous waves of thy corruption; ſo did it with David, Pſal. xxxix. 9. "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it." When he looked to the inſtruments and ſecond cauſes of his afflictions, his heart waxed hot, and the fire of his inward paſſion began to burn and break out; but, when he once eſpied God's hand and ſeal to the warrant for his correction, he became ſilent, and patiently ſubmitted to the Divine will.

3. Get a humble and ſelf denied frame of ſpirit, that you may have low thoughts of yourſelf, and of all your

attainments whatsoever. A proud man cannot think o submitting to the Divine will. but will break before h bow. Hence we see a vast difference between a prou Pharaoh, and an humble Eli, under the rod; the on says, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?" Bu the other saith, "It is the Lord, let him do what seem eth him good."

4 Get love to Jesus Christ. Love is an enduring principle, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. It endureth all things. I makes the soul, like the kindly child, draw nearer t Christ the more it is beaten.

5. Interpret God's ways and dealings with you al ways in the best sense. And, lastly, be earnest in pray er, that God may conquer your rebellious will, an subdue those mutinous risings of heart within you a gainst himself.

DIRECT. VI. Beware of envying wicked men, whe you see them in health and prosperity.

THE Psalmist, when he was chastened every morn ing, and in great adversity, was liable to this evil, Psal lxxiii. 3. "I was envious at the foolish, when I saw th prosperity of the wicked." Corrupt nature doth strong ly incline us to this sinful disposition, especially in th day of sore affliction: "For the Spirit that dwelleth i us lusteth to envy," James iv. 5. But, did we rightly consider the state of wicked men, we would see greate ground to pity than envy them, in the most prosperou condition: Why? "The prosperity of fools shall de stroy them," Prov. i. 32. It makes them forget God and turn hardened and secure in sin, which hastens the ruin. Who would envy a malefactor's going up a hig ladder, and being mounted above the rest of the peopl when it is only for a little, and in order to his bei turned over and hanged? This is just the case of t wicked men, who are mounted up high in prosperit for it is so only that they may be cast down deeper in destruction. Observe that word, Ps. xxxvii 1, 2. "Fr not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envio against

againſt the workers of iniquity: for they ſhall ſoon be cut down like graſs," &c. and that word, Pſ. xcii. 7. "When the wicked ſpring as the graſs, and when all the workers of iniquity do flouriſh, it is that they ſhall be deſtroyed for ever." It would be a brutiſh thing to envy an ox of his high and ſweet paſture, when he is only thereby fitted for the day of ſlaughter. Who would have envied the beaſts of old, the garlands and ribbons with which the heathens adorned them, when they went to be ſacrificed? Theſe external ornaments of health, wealth, pleaſures, and preferments, wherewith wicked men are endowed, cannot make their ſtate happy, nor change their natures to the better. Whatever appearance thoſe things make in the eyes of the world, they are but like a nauſeous dunghill covered with ſcarlet, as vile and loathſome in God's ſight as ever. How quickly is the beauty of earthly things blaſted! "The triumphing of the wicked is ſhort," Job xx. 5. They live in pleaſures on the earth for a while; but God ſets them in ſlippery places, from whence they ſoon ſlide into perpetual pain and anguiſh. They have a ſhort time of mirth, but they ſhall have an eternity of mourning. The longer their proſperity is, their ſins are the greater, and their ſufferings will be more grievous. But, O believer, it is in mercy to thee that God doth hedge up thy way with thorns, that thou mayeſt not find thy paths; whilſt he turns the wicked looſe, and ſuffers them to ſtray and wander whither they will, to their eternal ruin. God takes this method with thee to make thee meet for an inheritance, and prepare you for a crown of glory; but he takes a contrary way with the wicked, to fit them for deſtruction: Therefore you ought not to be fretful under his hand, but thankful. We read of queen Elizabeth, when ſhe was in priſon, how ſhe envied the poor milk-maid ſhe ſaw paſſing by, and would have thought herſelf happy to have been in her condition: But had that afflicted princeſs known the glorious reign of forty-four years ſhe was ſoon to enter upon, ſhe would not have repined at the happineſs of ſo mean a perſon. But, O afflicted believer, it is not a glorious reign for a ſet number of years, that

is provided for thee; it is even a reign with glorious Christ thy Redeemer for ever and ever: And, hast thou any ground to be discontented or envious?

DIRECT. VII. Guard against repining complaints and discontented murmurings, against the Providence of God, under heavy Sickness and affliction.

WE see the murmurers and complainers are classed with those that walk after their own lusts, Jude, v. 16. I know the people of God are liable to murmuring and impatience also under affliction; but there is a great difference between them and the wicked. I will have occasion to speak of believers murmuring afterwards, when I come to speak of their case in particular; but here I shall handle the sin of murmuring in general, and as it appears mainly in the unregenerate, under heavy affliction.

This sin of murmuring is the froth of impatience, and scum of discontent; it is first cherished by repining thoughts, and then vented by unsuitable complaints and expostulations, taxing the administration of Providence, as if God dealt too hard with us. Our very thoughts are audible with God, yea, as loud in his ears, as words are in ours; but it is yet worse, when repining thoughts are not crushed, but suffered to break forth into words tending to the dishonour of God.

Quest. "But, is it altogether unlawful to complain of affliction, whatever be our case?"

Ans. Humble complaints are not murmurings, nor sinful in themselves, otherwise there would be no room for prayer, and for spreading out our distressed case before the Lord. We find God's children [illegible] complaints in affliction; but when they do not complain of God, but to God, with an humble enquiry into the cause and meaning of his expostulations, and laying all the blame upon themselves, as did Job, chap. x. 1. 2. "I will leave my complaint upon thyself. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. I will say unto God, do

not

not condemn me; ſhew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me." Thus the bleſſed Son of God himſelf did in his diſtreſs, when he cried, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" But there, we may obſerve, he complains to God, not of God; he hath not a hard word or thought of God, but expreſſeth a holy confidence in God, "My God, my God," he hath two words of faith for one word of fear. He humbly enquires into the cauſe of the diſpenſation, and deſires to bring up his will to God, not that God ſhould bring down his will to him: If it be poſſible (ſays he) let this cup paſs; however, glorify thy name, provide for thy own glory, and do with me what thou pleaſeſt. In this matter our Lord doth ſet himſelf as an example of patience to us, teaching us to beware of impatient murmuring and quarrelling with God's Providence in our affliction; which many times we are guilty of, either when we harbour harſh thoughts of God's dealings, or break forth into raſh and unadviſed ſpeeches; when we charge God fooliſhly, and complain either of too much ſeverity, as Ezek. xviii. 2, 25. Or of too long delay, as Iſa. xlix. 14. Or when our complaints are mixed with unbelief and diſtruſt, as Pſal. lxxviii. 19. Or when we complain more of our puniſhment than we do of our ſin, and nothing will ſatisfy us but deliverance from trouble.

Now, to deter you from thoſe murmurings and complaints in trouble, I ſhall lay before you the following conſiderations: 1. They who deſerve worſt, do commonly complain and murmur moſt, and are moſt ready to think they are hardly dealt with. The unthankful Iſraelites were ſtill murmuring; ambitious Abſalom was diſcontented; bloody Haman, in the midſt of all his greatneſs, cries out, "What doth all this avail me?" But humble Jacob ſaith, he was not worthy of the leaſt of all the mercies and truth which God had ſhewed him. And holy Job bleſſes God, and patiently ſubmits, when he took from him, as well as when he gave him.

2. Murmuring is a ſin that God takes ſpecial notice of, and looks on it as an injury and affront done immediately againſt himſelf, Num. xiv. 27. "I have heard the

the murmurings of the children of Iſrael, which they murmur againſt me." He that gives ear to the groans of his own ſpirit, doth alſo hear the grumblings of thine, and will reckon with thee for them.

3. It can nowiſe benefit or relieve us in diſtreſs. I may ſay of ſinful complaining, (as Chriſt of ſinful care) which of you, by complaining, can add one cubit to his ſtature? What eaſe or relief can you get by contending with God? Nay, inſtead of eaſing you of your burden, it will make it heavier; as a child, the more he ſtruggles with his parents, he is the more beaten. The Iſraelites were once within eleven days journey of Canaan; but, by their murmurings, they provoked God to lead them forty years march in the wilderneſs, before they could reach it.

4. Whatever be your diſtreſs, there is no juſt ground for complaints whilſt thou haſt thy life for a prey. Remember that word of the afflicted church, Lam. iii. 39. "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the puniſhment of his ſins?" A man living, a man upon the earth, a man out of hell, hath no cauſe to complain, whatever be his afflictions. For, let him compare his ſin and puniſhment together, and he will find there is no proportion: Sin is a tranſgreſſion againſt the infinite God; puniſhment is but an affliction upon the finite creature: Sin ſtrikes at the very being of God: but puniſhment only at the comfort of the creature. So that whatever your puniſhment be, you have more cauſe to give thanks than to complain, and to ſay, with Ezra, "Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve: It might have been a thouſand times worſe, if ſtrict juſtice had been the rule: It is of the Lord's mercies we are not conſumed.

5. When you murmur under ſickneſs, you quarrel with the meſſenger of that ſovereign God who gave you your lives, and can take them again when he thinks fit; and we know, meſſengers ought not to be maltreated or abuſed, whatever be their commiſſion, and far leſs when they are ſent upon a good deſign. Now, if you conſider the deſign of this meſſenger, and his errand to you, inſtead of fretting and quarreling at his coming,

you

you ought rather to bleſs God that ſends ſuch a ſuitable harbinger and forerunner, to tell you that death is approaching, and that he vouchſafes to take ſo much pains on you, to wean you from the world, and make you willing to be gone, by long continued trouble; when he might have ſeized you in a violent manner, and driven you away by main force, without uſing any means to obtain your conſent. Have not many, who were moſt unwilling to die, at the beginning of a ſickneſs, been brought, by the increaſe and continuance of it, to be well ſatisfied to leave the world, and long to be with Chriſt? And was not this for their advantage?

6. Conſider the great evil and ſinfulneſs of impatient murmurings, complaints, and quarrellings, under affliction.

1. Murmurings hath in it much unbelief and diſtruſt of God, Pſal. cvi. 24, 25. "They believed not his word, but murmured in their tents" They could not believe that the wilderneſs was the way to Canaan, that God would provide and furniſh a table for them there, and relieve them in all their ſtraits. So it is with us in trouble; we quarrel with God's providence, becauſe we do not believe his promiſes; we do not believe that this can be conſiſtent with love, or can work for good in the end.

2. It hath in it unthankfulneſs. While we complain of one affliction, we overlook a thouſand mercies. The Iſraelites murmured ſo for what they had not, that they unthankfully forgot all that they had. Whereas, a thankful perſon is ſo far from fretting, that God doth not give him every thing, that he wonders that God ſhould give him any thing. "I am leſs than the leaſt of all thy mercies," ſaid Jacob. We are perplexed, ſaid Paul, but not in deſpair; we have God to go to, which is matter of praiſe; but the murmurer unthankfully overlooks all his preſent, and forgets all his former mercies; and gives not God thanks for any thing. Becauſe God removes his comforts, his health, ſtrength, and eaſe, for a time; all the years he formerly enjoyed, though moſt undeſervedly, are quite buried in oblivion.

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3. It implies much pride and ſelf-conceit. He that complains of God's dealings, ſecretly applauds his own deſervings. Only by pride comes contention. When men have a conceit of themſelves, they pick quarrels with God's providence, being apt to think they deſerve better treatment at his hands; whereas the humble ſoul is ſenſible he deſerves nothing but wrath, and therefore lays his hand on his mouth when the Lord afflicts him.

4. It involves men into rebellion againſt God. When God ſtrikes men for ſin, murmurers fly in his face, and kick againſt his ſtrokes, like bullocks unaccuſtomed to the yoke. They, in ſome reſpect, reſemble that deſperate apoſtate Julian, of whom it is written, that he ſhot up his darts againſt heaven, when he was in diſtreſs. They fulfil that word, Prov. xix. 3. "The fooliſhneſs of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth againſt the Lord." The repining heart boils with rage againſt God and his diſpenſations, like thoſe wicked Jews when hungry and hardly beſtead, Iſa. viii 21. "They ſhall fret themſelves, and curſe their king and their God, and look upwards."

5. It imports much impenitency and unhumbleneſs for ſin; and that we have ſeen little of the intrinſic evil of ſin; and of our ill-deſervings for it. Can we truly believe that our ſins deſerve hell-fire, and yet impatiently repine at ſickneſs and leſſer ſtrokes upon our bodies?

6. It includes much atheiſm and blaſphemy againſt God, and his infinite perfections, in ſeveral reſpects: (1) By our impatient murmurings, we either virtually deny that things here below are governed by God's providence; or elſe,

(2) We tax his providence with unrighteouſneſs in the management thereof; as if God did withhold from us what is due, or inflict on us what we have not deſerved. O what atheiſm is this! Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? May he not, upon the juſteſt ground, anſwer every murmur, as Matt. xx. 13. "Friend, I do thee no wrong?

(3) We in effect graſp at the ſovereignty, and uſurp the throne of the Moſt High God, and would have the diſpoſal

diſpoſal of things in our hands; yea, we preſume to ſummon God to our bar to give account of his adminiſtration, when we take upon us to quarrel any of his diſpenſations. Alas, we little remember the woe that is pronounced againſt ſo doing, Iſ. lxv. 9. "Woe unto him that ſtriveth with his Maker: ſhall the clay ſay to him that faſhioneth it, what makeſt thou? or thy work, he hath no hands?"

(4.) We on the matter take ſin's part againſt God; we either juſtify it, or extenuate its evil, and allege, by our murmurings, that God is unrighteous, to puniſh ſuch ſmall ſins with ſuch heavy afflictions.

(5.) We virtually queſtion God's power to reach us a great blow, when we enter the liſts with God, and contend with our Maker: Is it not in effect to ſay, we know how to reduce him to our terms, or make our party good againſt him?

(6.) We diſparage his wiſdom, and take upon us to be his counſellors, as if we could inſtruct him better in the management of affairs, and teach him what is fit to be done with his creatures. Hear what the Lord ſaith, Job xi. 2. "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty, inſtruct him? He that reproveth God, let him anſwer it." Murmuring is a reproving of God, and a charging him with ill conduct, ſaying in effect, with Abſalom, "There is none that takes care to order men's affairs; O, that I were king of the world! then ſhould things be better ordered than now they are." So blaſphemous is the language of our impatient murmurings. Let us, therefore, be aſhamed of them, and abhor ourſelves in duſt and aſhes, for our fooliſhneſs in cenſuring the actions of the only wiſe God. Shall a poor ignorant paſſenger, that underſtands not the uſe of the compaſs, be angry that the ſkilful pilot will not ſteer the veſſel according to his pleaſure.

(7.) We hereby ſlight and undervalue the riches of Divine goodneſs, of which we have formerly ſhared, and do ſtill partake; like the fooliſh and peeviſh children, if they cannot have their will, and get ſomething they want, do preſently throw away the things which they

have, saying, with unthankful Haman, "All this availeth me nothing."

Lastly, I might add, This sin hath some resemblance to hell itself; for there the damned do continually vex and torment themselves with their fretting and impatient thoughts, which cause them to break out into fearful rage and blasphemy against God.

Quest. "But how shall we prevent such discontented murmurings? for sometimes trouble is so great, we cannot bear it patiently."

Ans. God hath given you reason to bear rule over passion, and furnish you with strong arguments to prevail against discontents. Why then should you be so brutish as to dethrone reason, and suffer sense and passion to govern you? Are you not Christians, and sworn to live according to the rules of that excellent religion? Why then do you act so contrary to your profession and engagements.

Besides what I have already said, I shall add some few remedies more, for the cure of this murmuring distemper.

1. Look on thy murmurings, as worse than all thy pains and troubles whatsoever; those are but afflictions from God, but these are sins grievous and provoking unto God.

2. Remember the judgments which murmuring hath brought down from heaven upon sinners. Miriam was smitten with a leprosy for it; Dathan and Abiram were swallowed up alive; fiery serpents, plagues, and exclusion from Canaan, were Israel's judgment for this sin, 1 Cor. x. 10. "Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer." The arrows which murmurers shoot against heaven, do soon return upon their own heads.

3. Whatever thy sufferings are for the present, yet still believe thy case might be worse. The troubles that light upon the body, are nothing so terrible as those that light on the soul, Prov. xviii. 14. "A wounded spirit who can bear?" They are nothing to what thy innocent Saviour suffered upon the cross; yea, nothing

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to what ſome martyrs have endured for the truths of the goſpel.

4. Get very low thoughts of yourſelf, and a deep ſenſe of ill deſervings for ſin. O! ſhould a fire-brand of hell murmur for temporal afflictions?

5. Be ſtill examining thyſelf, rather than cenſuring God. Doth God ſeem to neglect thee, ſay, Alas, it is moſt juſt! Have I not neglected him, and given a deaf ear to his calls many a-day?

6. Bear in mind that thoſe troubles will not laſt; there is a great change near; either they will iſſue in life or death. If life, you will be aſhamed you had no more patience when ſick; if death, then if you belong to Chriſt, it will give a finiſhing ſtroke to all troubles and complaints, and heaven will make amends for all. But if you be not in Chriſt, whatever your afflictions be now, troubles a thouſand times worſe, are abiding you in another world: Death will turn thy croſſes into pure unmixed curſes; and then, how gladly wouldſt thou return to thy former afflicted ſtate, and purchaſe it at any rate, were there any poſſibility of ſuch a return? You now fly out in a paſſion, and ſay you are not able to bear what you complain of; but conſider, if you will not obediently bear God's rod now; you will then bear more, whether you will or not; and God will make you able to bear more, when there will never be any hopes of relief.

7. Study to give vent to thy ſorrow in a way of prayer and praiſe. An oven ſtopped is the more hot within; but the breath of prayer, or praiſe, gives eaſe. If we did complain more to God, we ſhould complain leſs of God. What a mercy is it, that you have ſtill God to go to? Improve the privilege, confeſs unworthineſs, and beg the grace of patience and ſubmiſſion out of Chriſt's full treaſures. Be alſo praiſing God for mercies received; and, however bad thy caſe is, bleſs God it is not in hell; you are in the land of hope.

CHAP. III.

Containing ſpecial Directions to the Children of God, when under Sickneſs, or any other Affliction.

DIRECT. I. Let believers eſpecially guard againſt Fainings, or deſponding under God's afflicting hand

THIS is an exhortation which God in a peculiar manner directs unto his children, Heb. xii. 5. "My ſon, deſpiſe thou not the caſtening of the Lord nor faint when thou art rebuked of him." There are two extremes mentioned, deſpiſing and fainting; I ſpoke of the firſt before, in Chap. II. Direct. II. It is a duty to feel our affliction, but a ſin to faint under it. God's people may be ſaid to faint under their trials, when they ſink or deſpond, or give way to fretting or repining under them. In the preceding Direction, I ſpoke of the evil of murmuring in general; here I ſhall ſpeak of believers fainting in particular.

1. I ſhall enquire whence their fainting under affliction doth proceed.

2. Bring ſome arguments and helps againſt this evil.

3. Anſwer ſome objections of fainting believers.

I. As to the firſt, whence thoſe faintings in believers do proceed: 1. They proceed from the grievouſneſs of their affliction, and the heavineſs of their burden, which is ready to amaze and ſtagger their thoughts, and ſtrike their ſpirits with fear and deſpondency. Hence did the Pſalmiſt complain, Pſ. lx. 3. "Thou haſt ſhewed thy people hard things; thou haſt made us to drink the wine of aſtoniſhment." And, Pſ. lxix. 2. "I ſink in deep mire, where there is no ſtanding: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me."

2. From the ſmallneſs of their ſpiritual ſtrength and particularly the weakneſs of their faith, Prov. xxiv.

10. "If thou faint in the day of adverſity, thy ſtrength is ſmall. Whence was it, that Peter fainted and began to ſink in the waters, but from the weakneſs of his faith? Mat. xiv. 30, 31. We know not our ſtrength till it be tried. Sometimes we have ſuch a conceit of it, that we think, like Paul, we can walk upon a ſea of trouble: But, in a little, behold ſome ſurpriſing blaſt affaults our confidence: And then we faint, and cry out with him, "Help, Lord, or elſe we periſh." Peter reckoned only upon the ſea, but did not think of the boiſterous wind; and he looked to his dangers, more than to the power that was to carry him through them.

3. From their impatience of delay. When deliverance is long a-coming, it is not eaſy to wait God's leiſure, and to keep the heart from deſperate concluſions, Pſal. xxxi. 22. "I ſaid in my haſte, I am cut off from before thine eyes."

4. From the power of ſatan's temptations, and furious aſſaults. When ſatan is let looſe in time of affliction to throw in his fiery darts, the believer is ready to faint, and ſay, as Pſ. lxxvii. 8. "Is his mercy clean gone for ever," &c.

5. From their weariſome conflicts with a body of death, and an ill heart. Theſe, in time of affliction, do add affliction to the afflicted.

6. From long and great deſertions. When God hides his face from the believer in affliction, his ſoul faints under it, as in Iſaiah xliv. 14. "Zion hath ſaid, the Lord hath forſaken me, my God hath forgotten me."

7. From the conſciouſneſs of their guilt, and ill deſervings before God, upon the account of old ſins, abuſe of mercies, and untender walking before God. Affliction doth revive old ſins, as with Job, Job xiii. 26. "Thou writeſt bitter things againſt me, and makeſt me to poſſeſs the ſins of my youth." His old ſins, and guilt of his youthful follies, now revived upon him, and ſat cloſe to his conſcience; which occaſioned his fainting under his burden.

8. Great afflictions do frequently cloud the believer's graces and evidences for heaven, and diſcover the r

their corruptions; whereby they are made to ſink under their trial. They ſee more unbelief, impatience, diſtruſt, and enmity to God in them, than they ſaw before; they ſee more of the weakneſs of grace, and of their want of faith and love, than before; whereby they are ſometimes tempted to raze the foundation, and ſay, all their former attainments were but deluſions, and their profeſſions but hypocriſy. Theſe things make afflictions ſometimes very heavy and ſinking to the people of God.

II. In the next place, for preventing and helping this evil of fainting under affliction; let believers conſider,

1. Theſe heavy trials are all needful for you. Deep waters are not more needful to carry a ſhip into the haven, than great afflictions are to carry the veſſels of our ſouls into the port of bliſs. Strong winds and thunder are frightful, but they are neceſſary to purge the air. One of the ſharpeſt calamities that ever befel Iſrael, was the Babyloniſh captivity, yet even this was in mercy to them, for the Lord ſaith, Jer. xxiv. 5. "I have ſent them out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good." Strange! of freemen to be made priſoners, and that in a ſtrange land among the Heathen; to be removed far from their own houſes, vineyards, friends; nay, and from the temple of God and his ordinances; and yet all this for their good! Why? They were hereby effectually weaned and broke off from their darling ſin of idolatry.

2. Conſider that your affliction, however heavy it be, will ſoon have an end, Iſa. lvii. 16. "For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the ſpirit ſhould fail before me, and the ſouls which I have made." The goldſmith will not let his gold lie longer in the furnace than it is purified. The wicked have a ſea of wrath to drink; but, O drooping believer, take comfort; you have but a cup of affliction, which will ſoon be exhauſted. The time is near, when all thy trials ſhall have an end: In heaven there is no croſs, no complaint, no tears, nor ſorrows for ever.

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3. Faint not, O child of God; for thoſe afflictions are the hell which thou ſhalt have; thou haſt nothing to fear hereafter. Judas had two hells, one in time, by terror in his conſcience, another after this life, which endures to eternity; but all the hell that a believer hath is the light affliction, which is but for a moment.

4. Deſponding or murmuring in affliction, is evil in any, but in none is it ſo bad as in the children of God. It doth very ill become their covenants, their privileges, their hopes. Have they reſigned and given up themſelves, and all they have, to God, by a ſolemn covenant, and will they fret when he diſpoſeth of them? Didſt thou not ſay, O believer, in the day when thy heart was ſtung with ſin, and the terrors of God made thee afraid, "O, let me have Jeſus Chriſt for my Saviour and portion, and I will be content though I ſhould be ſtricken with boils like Job, or beg my bread with Lazarus?" Now, God tries thee if thou wilt ſtand to thy word: O beware of retracting. Hath not that ſoul enough, who hath an all-ſufficient God for his portion? If God be thine in covenant, that comprehends all things.

5. It doth diſcompoſe and unfit the ſoul for any duty. It is ill ſailing in a ſtorm, ſo it is ill praying when the heart is in a ſtorm of diſquiet and deſpondency.

6. Your fainting under affliction, and carrying as if the conſolations of God were ſmall, is enough to ſtumble others at religion, and make them call the truth of it in queſtion. When they ſee thoſe that profeſs religion, and have often declared that their rejoicing is in Chriſt Jeſus as their portion, begin to ſink and deſpond under outward afflictions, O, may not they be tempted to ſay, "Where is the truth of religion? Where are thoſe divine ſupports and conſolations we have often heard of?"

7. O then ſeek to get faith revived, and ſtrengthened, and reſolve with Job to truſt in God, though he ſhould ſlay you. This would be of noble uſe to keep the heart from ſinking under preſſures of affliction, as

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the Pſalmiſt found it to his ſweet experience, Pſ. xxvii 13. "I had fainted, unleſs I had believed to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living."

III. I come to anſwer ſome objections or excuſes of fainting believers, which they do commonly allege as the ground of their diſcouragement in their afflictions.

Object. I. "O (ſaith one) my afflictions are not ordinary, they are ſore preſſures I lie under, and of various kinds too."

Anſ. 1. O believer, God hath taken the ordering of your lot in his own hand, and he knows what is fitteſt for you. Should a man be left to carve out his own portion, it would ſoon appear he would be his own greateſt enemy. We would all be for the dainties of pleaſure and proſperity, which would not be for our ſoul's health; as children think green fruit the beſt diet, becauſe they pleaſe their taſte; but their parents are wiſer to keep them from them.

2. God may ſee you have many and ſtrong luſts to be ſubdued, and that you need many and ſore afflictions to bring them down. Your pride and obſtinacy of heart may be ſtrong, your diſtempers deeply rooted and therefore the phyſic muſt be proportioned to them; as with the Iſraelites, Pſ. cvii. 11, 12. "Becauſe they rebelled againſt the words of God, and contemned the counſels of the Moſt High; therefore, he brought down their hearts with labour." O believer, your God and Father, that hath the mixing of your cup and portion, is a wiſe and ſkilful Phyſician, who knows your conſtitution and your need, 1 Pet. i. 6. "If need be, you are in heavineſs through manifold temptations." And, as he knows your need, ſo he underſtands your ſtrength. 1 Cor. x. 13. "Faithful is he, that will not ſuffer you to be tempted above what you are able."

3. God ſends great and ſore troubles, that you may have the more experience of God's wiſdom and mercy, in your ſupport and deliverance, Pſ. lxxi. 20 "Thou which haſt ſhewed me great and ſore troubles, ſhalt quicken and bring me up again from the depths of the earth."

Object.

Object. I. "But (ſaith one) my affliction is ſingular; there was never any in my condition."

Anſ. 1. It is very ordinary for every man in great diſtreſs to reckon his caſe ſingular, becauſe he feels beſt what is neareſt himſelf, but is a ſtranger to what his neighbour feels.

2. This ſuggeſtion is one of ſatan's devices, that he may tempt a child of God to queſtion his father's love; but he is a liar, and not to be credited in what he ſaith: For others of your brethren have been afflicted in the ſame kind and degree, if not worſe, 1 Pet. v. 9. "Knowing that the ſame afflictions are accompliſhed in your brethren that are in the world."

3. Whatever your caſe be, you muſt own your ſufferings are not ſo great as your ſins. The trials of God's people in Babylon were ſingular: Yet Ezra owns, Ezra iv. 13. "Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve." If our provoked Judge ſhall, in his clemency, ſend us to Babylon inſtead of hell, we have no cauſe to complain.

4. But, O child of God, however thou complaineſt of the ſingularity of affliction now, all ſuch complaints will be taken out of thy mouth ere long, and the time is near, when thou ſhalt be made to wonder at the wiſdom of God, in guiding ſo many ſons and daughters to glory, through ſuch a variety of trials, exerciſes, afflictions, and temptations; and made to ſay as thoſe in Mark vii. 37. "He hath done all things well."

Object. III. "But (ſaith one) my affliction is long continued, and I ſee no outgate: and, how can I but faint under it?"

Anſ. 1. It is not ſo long as your ſins deſerve; for in juſtice it might be for ever; it might be the worm that never dieth, and the fire that is never quenched.

2. Your ſufferings on earth are not ſo long as your reward in heaven, Rom viii. 18 "For I reckon that the ſufferings of this preſent time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which ſhall be revealed in us."

3. No length or continuance of affliction here ſhould hinder a believer's comfort. If we take a view of our

head and pattern Jeſus Chriſt, how long did his afflictions continue? No end was put to them, till he cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghoſt. Though he was the Son of God, yet, from the hour of his birth to the moment of his death, from his manger to his croſs, his affliction ſtill increaſed, and he ended his days in the midſt of them. Now, Chriſt is the head of the church, and your great repreſentative, O believers, into a conformity with whom you are predeſtinated; be content, then, to be like your head and pattern, to have no eaſe or reſt from afflictions, till you lie down in the grave; it is "there the wicked ceaſe from troubling, and there the weary are at reſt," Job iii. 17.

4. Remember that your afflictions are a part of Chriſt's croſs, which your loving Redeemer hath contrived for your good, and hath appointed you to take up and bear with him. Now, love to Chriſt ſhould keep you from wearying to bear off a part of Chriſt's croſs; eſpecially when he himſelf bears the heavieſt end of it, nay, bears you and your croſs both. It is ſaid of Jacob, Gen. xxix. 20. that "he ſerved ſeven years for Rachel, and they ſeemed to him but a few days, for the love he had for her." And ſhall not we endure a few years affliction for our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who lived a life of ſorrows, and died a curſed death, for our ſakes? Had we more love to Chriſt, his croſs would not be ſo tedious to us.

5. Should it not be good news to thee, that there is a deliverance for thee at death from all thy troubles, and that this time is haſtening, and very near; be not anxious for an outgate here in time, for that favours too much of unbelief and love to the world. Doth it not ſeem to ſay, that you would be better content to be turned back again to the ſtormy tumultuous ſeas of this world, than to be ſafely and ſpeedily landed at your reſt above? That you would be more happy in a few temporal mercies on earth, than to enter upon your eternal inheritance with Chriſt?

Object. IV. "No wonder (ſaith one) that I faint under my affliction, for I want thoſe conſolations and ſupports which God uſed to reſerve for afflicted ſaints."

An.

Anſ. 1. If God be preſently chaſtiſing you for your ſins, you muſt be content to feel the bitterneſs of ſin, before you taſte the ſweetneſs of God's conſolations.

2. Can you ſay that your afflictions have duly humbled you, and fitted you for comfort! Have they yet brought you to a willingneſs to quit and renounce all your beloved ſins, and even to part with all your earthly enjoyments and comforts at God's call, and to be content with God in Chriſt alone, for your happineſs and portion? If this be not done, your afflictions have not had their due effect, to prepare you for comfort, and, till then, you cannot expect it. You are in the hands of a wiſe and ſkilful phyſician, who will not too haſtily heal and bind up your ſores, ſo as to let them ſpoil and feſter at the bottom.

3. Though you have no ſenſible conſolations from God in your preſent trials, yet, you muſt ſtill labour to keep in the way of duty, and live by faith on his promiſes. Believe firmly, that God is good to them that love him, and that there is forgiveneſs with him to the penitent ſinner. And if all the ſtars withdraw their light whilſt thou art in God's way, then aſſure yourſelf the ſun is near the riſing.

Object. V. "But my affliction is ſuch, that it diſables me from duty, and makes me uſeleſs and unprofitable; and this makes me faint under my burden."

Anſ. 1. God ſends afflictions, never to unfit, but to quicken you for the performance of duty; to make you repent more thoroughly, pray more fervently, flee to Chriſt more earneſtly, and mind heaven more intenſely.

2. If it be your duty to others that your affliction incapacitates you for, then remember, if God in his providence diſable you for that, it is no longer a duty incumbent on you; and you muſt not grudge if God take you off, and put others in your room. God is a free and ſovereign agent, and will be tied to no mean or inſtrument whatſoever, for carrying on his work.

DIRECT. II. Let the Children of God be exemplary in Patience and Submiſſion to God under their Afflictions.

I TREATED of patience, and gave ſome motives and helps to it, to all afflicted perſons in general, Chap. II. Direct. V. But here I ſhall bring ſome ſpecial arguments to Chriſtian patience and ſubmiſſion, proper for believers. You that God hath done ſo much for beyond others, ought to ſhine in this grace of patience and be examples to others for it, when God chaſtens you, though with very ſore affliction.

1. Study patience under affliction; for it is the common path and beaten road to heaven, that all the ſaints have trod, who have gone thither before you. Behold the print of the foot ſteps of all the cloud of witneſſes in this road; and would you be ſingular, and chuſe a way of your own? When God ſolemnly renewed his covenant with Abraham, and he had prepared the ſacrifice, whereby it was to be ratified and confirmed, God made a ſmoaking furnace to paſs between the pieces of the ſacrifice, Gen. xv. 17. to let him know that there was a furnace of affliction attending the covenant of grace and peace, and all that enter therein to. God has appointed that all the ſtones of the ſpiritual and heavenly building ſhall be hewed and poliſhed by affliction here; and we are not to think that God's ordinary way will be changed for us. We muſt not think to walk on roſes, when ſo many worthies have marched through briers and thorns to heaven.

2. Conſider that the greateſt afflictions you meet with, are conſiſtent with the love of God; nay, ſpring from his love to you. Every ſanctified rod is a gift and royal donation ſent by the hand of God to you, Phil. i. 29. "To you it is given, in behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe on him, but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake." Now ſurely, if we look on the croſs as a gift and honour, an advantage and bleſſing, we would bear it patiently, Pſ. xciv. 12. "Bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſteneſt,

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O Lord." O believer, thy temporal croſs comes from the ſame love that thy eternal crown comes from, according to Rev. iii 19. 21 Men will not take pains to correct ſtubborn ſervants, but will turn them out of doors; but love conſtrains them to chaſtiſe their ſons. God out of hatred lets many a ſinner go unpuniſhed in this world; for, why ſhould he prune or dreſs the tree which he intends for the fire? The malefactor eſcapes ſcourging that is condemned to the gallows. Job xxi. 30. "The wicked is reſerved to the day of deſtruction, they ſhall be brought forth to the day of wrath." But it is far otherwiſe with the children of God. That is a ſtrange word which Job hath, Job vii. 17. 18. "What is man that thou ſhouldſt magnify him? and that thou ſhouldſt ſet thine heart upon him? and that thou ſhouldſt viſit him every morning, and try him every moment?" Now, if we compare this place with others in the context, we will ſee how he acknowledgeth that the moſt overwhelming diſtreſs proceeds from the love and care of God, yea, from his fixing his heart on him, to magnify him, and do him good: And that for this end he doth chaſten him every morning, and try him every moment! And that with ſuch afflictions as for the preſent are ſo far from being joyous, as that they give the ſoul no reſt, but make the man weary of his life; as he expreſſeth what effects his affliction had on himſelf. Yea, it may be obſerved, in the providence of God from the foundation of the world, that thoſe who have had moſt afflictions, have had moſt grace, and the moſt eminent teſtimonies of acceptance with God. Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God, had the moſt affliction of any; and yet the Father always loved him, and was well pleaſed with him.

3. Conſider the bright examples of patience which God ſets before you in his word. Beſides that of his dear Son the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, of which I ſpoke before; conſider the patience of Job, when he was ſtript of all his earthly comforts, and laid under the greateſt afflictions, yet he calmly falls down and worſhips God, Job i. 12. and ſaid, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked ſhall I return: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the name of the Lord.

In

In all this Job ſinned not, nor charged God fooliſhly Conſider the patience of David, when he was driv from his throne, from his houſe, and from God's ſa tuary, and all this by his own ſon: Yet, how ſubmiſſ is he to God? 2 Sam. xv. 26. "Behold here I am, him do to me as ſeemeth good to him." And wh Shimei curſed him and threw ſtones at him, he patie ly bore it, and would ſuffer no harm to be done him it, ſaying, as 2 Sam. xvi. 11. "Let him alone; and him curſe, for the Lord hath bidden him." Conſider patience of holy Eli, when, though he heard ſuch ne as like a ſudden clap of thunder made the ears of ſo as heard it to tingle, and their hearts to tremble, yet calmly and quietly ſubmitted to it, 1 Sam. iii. 18. " is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good." doth not fly in God's face in a paſſion, but falls do at his feet in a humble ſubmiſſion. Obſerve, alſo, wonderful patience of Aaron, when God afflicted very ſore, he is ſilent and ſubmiſſive under the Lo hand, Lev. x. 3. "And Aaron held his peace." If conſider the greatneſs of the puniſhment, we will ſee more cauſe to commend the greatneſs of his patie 1. Aaron loſt his children; not his eſtate or wor ſubſtance, but his children; theſe are a part of a m bowels; other earthly loſſes are not comparable this; therefore it was that ſatan, that cunning ene reſerved the loſs of Job's children to the laſt onſet, his great maſter-piece and ſharpeſt attack. How f did Rachel lament and weep for her children! M ii. 18. Yet Aaron held his peace. 2. Aaron loſt his ſons at once; how pathetically did David bewail loſs of one ſon! 2 Sam. xviii. 33. "O my ſon A lom, my ſon, my ſon," &c. yet Aaron loſt both his together, and ſaith not one word; he held his pe 3. Aaron loſt them by a ſudden death, of which had no warning; ſickneſs uſually prepares men for ſtroke that is coming by death; but Aaron met wi ſurpriſing blow, yet he held his peace. 4. Aaron's were not taken away by an ordinary ſtroke of G hand, but by an extraordinary ſupernatural rod; fo is ſaid, "there went out a fire from the Lord, and

voured them, and they died before the Lord." Lev. x. 2. He loſt them in ſuch a manner as might ſpeak forth God's anger; now, a religious father had rather loſe all his children in the favour of God, than one child in his anger; yet, whatever were the bitter ingredients of this cup, Aaron was not impatient againſt God that mixed it for him, but held his peace, becauſe God did it.

4. To engage you to patience under your trials, do but compare your caſe with that of others. Do not ſay, there are none afflicted as you are; for there are many far deeper plunged in the waters of Mara than you are; ſome are ſtill upon the rack, and ſpend their whole days and years in continual fighting and ſtruggling; as in Pſ. xxxi 10. "My life is ſpent with grief, and my years with ſighing." Have you ſore diſtreſs in your bodies? others have grievous wounds in their ſouls. Do you hear the wrath of man? others hear the wrath of God. You have but one ſingle trial, others have many twiſted together. Some are ſtript of all comforts, you have comforts ſtill remaining. You have many ſad things in your trial, but you have not ground as yet to complain as the Pſalmiſt doth, Pſal. xlii. 7. "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." Take a view of what the Son of God, what the apoſtles, and what the martyrs, and other worthies have endured. They had trial of cruel mockings, ſcourgings, bonds, and impriſonments; they wandered in deſerts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented. They were tempted, they were crucified, ſtoned to death, ſawn aſunder, ſlain with the ſword, &c. And yet, how well did they take with the croſs? Saith Paul, "We glory in tribulation," Rom. v. 3. And what ſaith James, Jam. i. 2. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." As if he had ſaid, "Rejoice aye more and more that you are afflicted; God is magnifying you, he is viſiting you, doing you good, taking the more pains on you, and fitting you for glory."

5. The conſideration of God's former mercies and kindneſſes to you ſhould engage you to patience in trou-

ble,

ble, and make you bluſh to take any thing ill out of God's hand. Thus Job taught his impatient wife, Job ii. 10. "What? ſhall we receive good at the hand of God, and ſhall we not receive evil?" O believer, let not thy affliction cauſe thee to bury thy mercies in oblivion. Has not God brought thee from Satan's family, and put you among his children; and will you forget or undervalue that honour? Hath he ſtruck off thy fetters, taken off thy priſon garments, and ſet you at liberty; and will you be unthankful? Hath he given thee Chriſt for thy treaſure and portion, and entitled you to his unſearchable riches: and will you be diſcontented? Hath he given you the graces of his Spirit, which are more precious than rubies, and will you quarrel when he ſmites in ſome outward things? Hath he made you an heir of glory, and provided eternal manſions above for you; and will you be fretful for want of ſome trifles here? The view Moſes had of the recompence of reward in heaven, cauſed him to chuſe to ſuffer affliction with the people of God.

6. The time of affliction is uſually God's gracious tryſting ſeaſon with his people, the time of their rareſt comforts and ſweeteſt foretaſtes of heaven, according to 2 Cor. i. 5. Paul and Silas did never ſing more joyfully than when they were laid in the inner priſon, with their backs torn with ſcourges, and their feet faſt in the ſtocks, Acts xvi. 24. And when was it that Jacob ſaw the angels of God aſcending and deſcending upon the ladder that reached between heaven and earth, but at the time when he was in a deſtitute caſe, forced to lie in the open field, having no canopy but the heavens, and no pillow but a ſtone? When was it that the three children ſaw Chriſt in the likeneſs of the Son of man walking with them, but when they were in the furnace, and that when it was hotter than ordinary? When was it that Ezekiel had a viſion of God, but when ſitting ſolitarily by the river Chebar in the land of his captivity? When was it that John got a glorious viſion of Chriſt, but when he was an exile in the iſle of Patmos? And, when was it that Stephen ſaw the heavens

vens opened, and Chriſt ſtanding at the right hand of God pleading for him; but when they were ſtoning and bruiſing him to death? So that the moſt remarkable experiences of God's kindneſs, that believers get in this world, have been tryſted to the time of affliction: The conſideration whereof ſhould move every Chriſtian to wait on the Lord, and bear his croſs with patience.

7. When you are helped to Chriſtian patience and ubmiſſion under God's hand, it doth contribute much o the credit of religion, and to the conviction of the world, that there is a certain reality in the truths of the oſpel, and a great efficacy in the grace of God which ears you up, and carries you through beyond the rength of nature.

8. O believer, bear up with patience under the croſs, or thou haſt not long to bear it. God's wrath on the hurch abideth but for a moment, yea, a little moment, Iſa. xxvi. 20. "Come, my people, enter thou nto thy chambers, and ſhut up thy doors about thee, ide thyſelf as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpaſt." Surely a moment, a little moment, which is the ſmalleſt part of time, will ſoon be over; and wilt thou not have patience for a moment? The Pſalmiſt ſupported himſelf with this conſideration, Pſ. ciii. 9. "He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever." The time of indignation will ſoon be overpaſt, and the time of conſolation will ſucceed. O believer, the end of all thy trials is near; think on it, and look for it. Is it bodily pain or ſickneſs that is thy affliction! Then conſider, the end of it will be either life or death: If death, then what thou ſuffereſt the laſt brunt, bear it patiently: Thoſe enemies you now ſee, you will ſee them again no more. In the manſions above, there is no pain nor crying: The inhabitants there ſhall never ſay they are ſick; and one hour with them will make thee forget all thy momentary afflictions. If the iſſue ſhall be life, you will be aſhamed, when well, that you had not more patience whilſt ſick.

I ſhall cloſe this direction with the words of the apoſtle James, Jam. v. 10, 11. "Take, my brethren, the

prophets, who have ſpoken in the name of the Lord, f
an example of ſuffering affliction, and of patience. E
hold, we count them happy which endure. Ye ha
heard of the patience of Job, and have ſeen the end
the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tene
mercy."

DIRECT. III. Let believers be much employed in t
praiſes of God, while they are under Affliction
Sickneſs, or otherwiſe.

AS we ſhould bleſs the Lord at all times, and ke
up good thoughts of God on every occaſion; ſo eſp
cially in the time of affliction. Hence we are co
manded to glorify the Lord in the fire, Iſa. xxiv. 1
And this the three children did in the hotteſt furna
So Job bleſſed God when he had taken away his gre
eſt comforts, Job i. 21. And this is agreeable to t
command, 1 Theſſ. v. 18. "In every thing give thank
I grant, indeed, we cannot give thanks for afflictions
affliction, but either as it is the means of ſome good
us, or as the gracious hand of God is ſome way remai
able therein towards us. In this reſpect, there is
condition on this ſide hell, but we have cauſe
praiſe God in, even in the greateſt calamities. Her
it was that David, when he ſpeaks of his affliction, l
cxix. 67. adds preſently, "Thou art good, and d
good." And he declares, ver. 65. "Thou haſt de
well with thy ſervant, O Lord, according unto thy wor
Hence Paul and Silas praiſed God when they wi
ſcourged and impriſoned.

Well, then, O believer, obey the command of t
God, and imitate his worthies, by praiſing God unc
thy affliction. 1. This practice would be very pleaſa
and acceptable to God; for as muſic is ſweeteſt on t
waters, ſo praiſe is moſt agreeable to God from an
flicted ſoul on the waters of trouble. It is a ſign of
noble and generous ſpirit, to ſing the praiſes of Go
goodneſs while his hand is afflicting us. Diſtreſs a
danger will make the wickedeſt to pray; but it is
princi

principle of love and gratitude that makes thy ſoul to praiſe. 2. It would bring credit to religion, to ſee ſaints thankful and praiſing God under the croſs: It would make people ſay, ſurely they find ſweetneſs in God and his ways, that we ſee not; they have meat to eat the world knows not of. And this would invite ſtrangers to come and try a religious life. The joyful praiſes of the martyrs at the ſtake, and in the flames, made people go home with love to religion in their hearts. 3. If the iſſue of your affliction ſhould be death, this employment of praiſe would be a ſweet preparative to fit and diſpoſe you for the work of heaven. Uſe yourſelves much to this heavenly life, and be often trying to ſing the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb in time of ſickneſs and trouble; and this would ſweeten the thoughts of death, and make you incline to be there, where praiſe is their conſtant employment.

Queſt. "What ſhould be the ſubject of a believer's thankſgiving and praiſe under affliction?"

Anſ. He hath manifold grounds of praiſe; as, 1. Upon the account of God's mercies to him through the bypaſt part of his life. His mercies to thee, O believer, cannot be numbered; compare thy mercies with thy croſſes, and thou wilt ſoon ſee thy receivings are far greater than thy ſufferings. Thou haſt had many days of plenty for one day of ſcarcity, many days of liberty for one day of ſtraits, many days of health for one day of ſickneſs. And are not theſe to be remembered with praiſe.

2. And, more particularly, in the greateſt affliction, thou haſt ground to praiſe God, O believer, that thou waſt born in a land of light, where thou hadſt the means of converſion to God, and acquaintance with Jeſus Chriſt; and eſpecially, that God of his free grace made theſe means effectual to work a ſaving grace in you, when others are paſt by. Is not this matter of praiſe, that he opened your eyes, humbled your ſoul, and renewed your heart; that he gave you Chriſt, forgave your ſins, and adopted you into his family, and made you an heir of heaven? Oh, what a ſad caſe would it be, if you were yet in your ſins, and in the bondage

of ſatan? If you had converſion-work to begin to, if you had your faith and juſtification, and intereſt in Chriſt, all to ſeek, and all your preparation for heaven to make; if you had all this to do with a ſick and pained body, and a diſordered mind, that cannot command one ſettled thought, with the terrible views of death and eternity before your eyes! This is the caſe that God in juſtice might have left you to. Well, then, ought you not to praiſe God, that ſent his Holy Spirit in time to determine your hearts to cloſe with Chriſt, and be reconciled to that God you are ſhortly to appear before; and that thoſe ſins, which now would have been your terror, are all forgiven and waſhed away through the blood of Jeſus Chriſt?

3. Is it not matter of praiſe, in thy greateſt trouble, that thou haſt a great high prieſt, that is paſſed into the heavens, to provide a manſion with the Father for thee and to receive thy ſoul when ſeparated from the body "that, where he is, there you may be alſo?"

4. You have cauſe to bleſs God, that he ſends ſuch ſuitable harbingers, as ſickneſs and trouble, to tell you that death is approaching; and that he ſhould take ſuch pains on you, to wean you from the world, and make you willing to be gone. Many of God's people, that have been averſe to dying at the beginning of a ſickneſs, by the increaſe and continuance of it, have been brought to be well ſatisfied to depart, that they may be with Chriſt.

5. You have ground to bleſs God for timeing your afflictions ſo well, that he ſent them not till he ſaw you ſtood in need of them; he ſaw a need before them, as 1 Pet. i. 6. and he would not let you want what was needful.

6. You ought to praiſe God, that he mitigates your trials, and proportions your burdens for you back; that when he takes a rod to you, he hath not made it a ſcorpion; that when he deprived you of one comfort and enjoyment, he did not ſtrip you of all, and leave you wholly comfortleſs; that when you ſuffer in one thing, he hath not made you to ſuffer in every thing, in ſoul, body, eſtate, relations, and all together; that, inſtead of afflicting you for a few days, he hath not

not made your whole life a ſcene of miſery and affliction. Bleſs God that he puniſheth you leſs, unſpeakably leſs, than your iniquities deſerve; that your ſick-bed is not hell, your fever is not everlaſting burnings, your pain is not the gnawing of the worm that never dieth.

7. You have cauſe to praiſe God that your affliction is not ſo great as that of ſome others, and even of ſome that were very dear to God, and had not grieved him ſo much as you have done. Remember the trials that ſome have endured, of whom the world was not worthy, which I mentioned before as recorded, Heb. xi. Your's are nothing to their's, nothing to Job's, that eminent ſervant of God. Obſerve the difference with thankſgiving and praiſe.

8. You have reaſon to bleſs God for the ſtrength and ſupport he hath given you under affliction. You would ſoon ſink and ſuccumb under a ſmall burden, if he did not ſupport you by his grace; but when he bears you up, the heavieſt trial ſhall not ſink you. Have you not met with ſome afflictions, you have thought at a diſtance you would never have been able to bear up under them? yet, when they have come, you have found them light and portable, by reaſon of the ſtrength God hath beſtowed upon you.

9. You have ground of thankſgiving, that the mercies and bleſſings which God hath continued with you, are far greater than theſe he hath taken from you; for though he hath taken this and that temporal bleſſing from you, yet he hath not taken Chriſt from you, nor his Holy Spirit from you; he hath not ſeparated you from his love, nor cut you off from all the hopes of heaven. However great your trials be, yet ſtill there is a mixture of mercy in your lot, which ſhould be matter of praiſe.

10. You have cauſe, O believer, to bleſs God, that all the afflictions he brings on you are in love, and for your profit. All his ways are mercy and truth to you. If he ſmile, it is in mercy; and if he ſmite, it is in mercy. God may change his diſpenſation towards his children, but never his diſpoſition: his heart is ſtill towards

wards them, and the cords wherewith he ſcourgeth them are cords of love. Their profit is the great thing he aims at, in all their chaſtiſements, Heb. xii. 10. He deſigns thereby to reclaim them from their wanderings, cut off proviſions for their luſts, make them pant and long for a better ſtate, and cauſe them mend their pace towards it. Hence David ſaid, "It is good for me that I was afflicted: for before I was afflicted I went aſtray, but now I have learned to keep thy word." Pſ. cxix. 67. 71. From all which it appears you have manifold ground of praiſe, even in the time of affliction.

DIRECT. IV. Let the children of God, when viſited with ſickneſs, ſet about actual preparation for death and eternity.

EVERY believer hath his main work done, and is always in a gracious ſtate, by reaſon of his union with Jeſus Chriſt, his reconciliation with God through the merits of his blood, and the univerſal change that is wrought in him by regenerating and ſanctifying grace upon which account, every child of God hath habitual preparation for meeting with death. Yet, becauſe frequently, when ſickneſs cometh, there are many things out of order with them, that make death frightful and undeſireable, they muſt ſet about actual preparation for death, and ſeek to have their ſouls made ready for the bridegroom's coming. And here I ſhall ſhew wherein this actual readineſs of believers doth conſiſt, which ſhould be their proper work and exerciſe in time of ſickneſs, eſpecially when ſickneſs is lingering, and doth not deſtroy the uſe of reaſon. But beware of thinking that this ſhould be delayed till ſickneſs come: No, no, the time of health is the main working ſeaſon, and all ſhould be then put by hand as far as poſſible. But ſeeing even the beſt generally find much to do at the very laſt, I ſhall give the following advices for your actual preparation:

1. Seeing ſickneſs is a means appointed of God for his people's good, and particularly for fitting them for

a better world, labour earneſtly to reap the benefit of ſickneſs, ſeek God's bleſſing upon it, that thereby you may be helped to diſcover more of the evil of ſin; that you may hate and abhor it the more; and that you may ſee more effectually the vanity and vexation of the world; and get your heart looſed from all the things of time, and brought to a willingneſs to be diſſolved that you may be with Chriſt.

2. Seeing a time of death and ſickneſs is the time of your greateſt need, beg earneſtly of God, for your Redeemer's ſake, ſuch ſpecial aſſiſtance, influences, and operations of his holy Spirit, as he knows needful for you in your preſent low and weak condition, in order to carry on and complete your actual readineſs for meeting with himſelf at death, and entering into the inviſible world, and being fixed unalterably in your everlaſting ſtate.

3. Renew the exerciſe of repentance, and of faith in the blood of Chriſt, for removing all grounds of quarrel and controverſy between God and your ſoul. And, in order thereto, review your bypaſt life, and look into your heart alſo, and ſearch out every predominant ſin and idol of jealouſy; for if there be any iniquity regarded in your heart, and unrepented of by you, it may occaſion no little anguiſh and bitterneſs of ſpirit in a dying hour. Well, when thou haſt diſcovered ſin, humbly confeſs and bewail it beforet he Lord, and aſk forgiveneſs for it through the blood of Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God, which cleanſeth from all ſin. Yea, make confeſſion of all thy ſins, and particularly reflect upon the fountain and ſpring of them, viz. thy original ſin. Know the plague of thy own heart, and mourn over it, mourn for the loſs and miſ-ſpending, of ſuch precious time. Mourn for the unprofitableneſs of thy life. Now, when the ax is laid to the root of the tree, by ſickneſs, it is high time to mourn for your unfruitfulneſs under the means of grace and waterings of the holy Spirit. Mourn for your ſinning againſt ſuch light and love as have been many days diſplayed to you in the glorious goſpel. And, in a ſpecial manner, mourn for your ſins of omiſſion, which commonly are but little

little minded by us. Thus mourn for all thy ſins, till thou doſt water thy couch with thy tears. It is moſt ſuitable that death ſhould find every man, even every child of God, in the exerciſe of mourning and repentance; for they that thus ſow in tears, ſhall eternally reap in joy. But ſee that your tears run much in the goſpel-channel, and flow from the believing views of a crucified Chriſt, whom you have pierced in your ſins. And, in the midſt of your mourning, be ſtill aiming to take faith's grips of the clefts of the rock, for ſheltering thy ſoul from the guilt of paſt ſins: ſay, "Lord Jeſus, I have no refuge but thy wounds, no fountain but thy blood, no covert but thy righteouſneſs. And ſeeing thou freely makeſt offer of thy merits for my protection, and inviteſt even the chief of ſinners to come unto thee, ſaying, Look unto me, be ye ſaved: Lord, I embrace the offer, and flee to thee to cover me." O believer, do this, not once or twice, but do it a hundred times over; do it as often as thou haſt breath to draw in the world, Be ſtill breathing to the very laſt after a crucified Jeſus, for relief againſt the guilt of ſin, which thou art always contracting, and will be, till the earthly houſe of this tabernacle be diſſolved.

4. In order to your actual readineſs to go forth to meet the bridegroom, when coming to you by death, you muſt do as the wiſe virgins, Mat. xxv. 7. "Ariſe and trim your lamps." As it is not enough to have a fair lamp of profeſſion, ſo it is not ſufficient to have only the oil of grace in the lamp; nay, or to have it burning in ſome degree. There is more requiſite at this time, that the ſoul may be actually ready; the lamp muſt be trimmed, which imports, 1. A ſupplying it with more oil; you muſt ſeek to have your grace increaſed, to have new degrees, new ſtrength, and new ſupplies of grace given from God, to fit you for the laſt conflict with your ſpiritual enemies, and eſpecially the laſt enemy, death. 2. It imports a ſtirring up of the oil, raiſing the wick ſome higher: So there muſt be an excitation of grace, which may be in a low declining

g condition: you muſt endeavour to ſtir and raiſe it
to a more lively exerciſe, and more elevated acts.
ir up the gift that is in thee; make the oil burn clear
id ſhine bright. Bring faith, love, repentance and
ly deſires, to a lively exerciſe. 3. This trimming
ports the cleanſing of the lamp, by taking away the
ad aſhes that hinder the light, or prevent its burning
clearly as otherwiſe it would. So you muſt labour
take away the dead aſhes of corruption, that hinder
e ſhining of grace; remove all unbelief, earthlineſs,
adneſs, ſelf, and formality, and whatever elſe doth
ppreſs the exerciſe of faith, love, and heavenly-mind-
neſs: let all theſe dead aſhes be ſnuffed away by re-
ntance and mortification. As you ought to ſtrive
rneſtly againſt all thoſe heart-evils in the time of
alth, ſo now labour to give them a dead-ſtroke when
ath's harbinger gives you a ſummons.

5. Be diligent in gathering and ſummoning up all
ur evidences for heaven and eternal life, that ſo you
ay not venture into the dark valley at an uncertain-
. The comfort of dying will much depend on the
arneſs of your evidences; it is therefore your wiſ-
m to examine them carefully, and ſee if you can
y, "I know in whom I have believed; I have con-
nted with my ſoul to the method of ſalvation laid
wn in the covenant of grace. I am deſirous that the
ory of it ſhould be eternally aſcribed to the free grace
God, and the creature be wholly abaſed in his ſight.
have choſen God for my portion, and Chriſt for my
ly Saviour; and the happineſs which I aim at is, to
joy God in Chriſt for ever. And, in order thereto,
depend on the Holy Spirit to apply the redemption
hich Jeſus Chriſt hath purchaſed to me, and to ſancti-
me perfectly. There is no ſin but what I hate and
ſire to part with. I would rather have more holi-
eſs, than to have health, wealth, and all the pleaſures
the world. I earneſtly deſire the flouriſhing of
hriſt's kingdom, and prefer Jeruſalem to my chiefeſt
oy." If theſe your evidences be clear, you may chear-
ully take death by the cold hand, and welcome its grim
meſſengers, and long to be gone that you may be with

Chriſt. You may ſay, as Pſalm xxiii. 4. "When I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." You may go off the ſtage with the Pſalmiſt's words in your mouth, Pſal. xxxi. 5. "Into thine hand I commit my ſpirit, for thou haſt redeemed me, O Lord God of truth."

6. Labour earneſtly to overcome the love of life and fears of death, ſo as to be content to part with all things here at God's call. O believer, what is there in this earth to tempt thee to hang back, when God calls thee to depart? while you are here, you may lay your account with many loſſes, croſſes, diſappointments, griefs, and calamities, of all ſorts. Friends will fail you, enemies will hate you, luſts will moleſt you, ſatan will tempt you, the world will deceive you. Death is the way that the deareſt of God's ſaints, and all the cloud of witneſſes, have gone before you; yea, the Lord Jeſus your Head hath trod this path, and hath taken the ſting out of death, and hath paved a way through its dark valley, that his people may ſafely follow him. Hath the Captain of your ſalvation gone before you, and will any of his ſoldiers ſhrink to follow him? Are you content to remain always at the ſame diſtance from him, and to enjoy no more of his preſence than now you have? Are you ſatisfied to live for ever with no more knowledge of God, no more love to Chriſt, no more holineſs or heavenly mindedneſs than at preſent you have? Do you not groan under your remaining ignorance, deadneſs, wanderings, pride, paſſion, unbelief, ſelfiſhneſs, worldlineſs, and other ſins and luſts that here beſet you? And are you not deſirous to go to the place where you will be eternally free from them all, and where you never complain of a dull, dead or ſenſeleſs frame of heart, or of any heart-wearineſs, or wandering in duty any more; for the heart ſhall then be as a fixed pillar in the temple of God, and ſhall go no more out; the eternal adoration and praiſes of God ſhall be the ſoul's delight and element for ever. By ſuch conſiderations, ſtrive to conquer the fears of death and deſires of life, which are often great clogs to the people of God in their preparation for removing.

7. Be often meditating upon the heavenly glory which

which ſhortly all believers will ſee and enjoy. Be much in the contemplation of the glorious company above; behold Chriſt upon his glorious throne at the right-hand of God, and Abraham, David, Peter, Paul, and all the reſt of the faithful ones, with their crowns of righteouſneſs, triumphing about their Redeemer.—Think, O believer, how happy will that day be, when thou ſhalt meet with thy father and thy brethren, and when thou ſhalt ſee thy elder brother on the throne, ready to paſs ſentence in thy favours. What melody will that ſentence ſound in thine ears, "Come, ye bleſſed of my father!" What frame wilt thou be in, when he ſets the crown of glory on thy head? "O eternally free love!" wilt thou cry, "O Saviour thou didſt wear a crown of thorns, that I might wear a crown of glory: thou didſt groan on the croſs, that I might now ſing. Wonderful free love, that choſed me, when thouſands were paſt by; that ſaved me from ruin, when my companions in ſin muſt burn in hell for ever!" Think, how raviſhing it will be to meet with your godly acquaintances in heaven, with whom you prayed, and praiſed, and converſed here! Will you not then cry out, "O my brethren, what a change is here! this glorious place is not like the poor dwellings we had on earth; this body, this ſoul, this ſtate, this place, our clothes, our company, our language, our thoughts, are far unlike thoſe we had then! the bad hearts, the body of death, the corruptions and temptations we then complained of, are all now gone. We have no more fears of death or hell, no more uſe for repentance or prayer, faith or hope, theſe are now ſwallowed up in immediate viſion, eternal love, joy and praiſe." And for thy help, O believer, in meditating on theſe things, read ſome parts of the book of Revelation, or cauſe them to be read to you; and ſuppoſe with yourſelf, you had been a companion with John in the iſle of Patmos, and had got ſuch a view of the glorious majeſty, the bright thrones, the heavenly hoſts, the ſhining ſplendor which he ſaw, the Saints in their white robes, with crowns on their heads, and pſalms in their hands, and heard them ſinging the ſong

of Moſes and the Lamb, and trumping forth their eternal Hallelujahs; what a heavenly rapture wouldſt thou have been in! Well then, O believer, thou ſhalt ſhortly have clearer and more ſweet ſights than all thoſe which John, or any of the Saints, ever ſaw here upon earth. Surely that heavenly glory is a ſubject worthy of thy thoughts, and moſt ſuitable for thee to meditate on in time of ſickneſs, and when in the view of death.

8. It would alſo be very ſuitable at this time, in order to your actual readineſs for death, to be frequently looking out and longing for Chriſt's coming: as Abraham ſtood in his tent door ready to go forth to meet the angels that were ſent unto him, ſo ſhould the believer keep himſelf in a waiting poſture at this time. He ſhould be like the loving wife, that longs and looks for the coming of her abſent huſband, according to his letters to her; by this time (thinks the) he will be at ſuch a place, and againſt ſuch a time he will be at another place, and ſo in a few days I will ſee him. It is the character of believers, they are ſuch as love his appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 8. They deſire his coming, Cant. viii. 14. "Make haſte, my beloved; even ſo come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly." Believers ſhould look upon themſelves as pilgrims here, wandering in a wilderneſs abſent from home, and at a diſtance from their father's houſe; and, in time of affliction, it is very proper for them to be crying, as David doth, Pſalms lv. 6. "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at reſt: I would haſten my eſcape from the windy tempeſt." "O when ſhall the time of my pilgrimage, and the days of my baniſhment be finiſhed, that I may get home to my country and friends above? Oh! my Lord is gone, my Saviour hath left the earth, and entered into his glory? My friends and brethren are gone to their bleſſed reſt, where they ſee God's face, and ſing his praiſe for ever: and how can I be willing to ſtay behind, when they are gone? Muſt I be ſinning here, when they are ſerving God above? Muſt I be groaning and ſighing,

when

when they are triumphing and dividing the ſpoil? Surely I will look after them, and cry, O Lord, how long? When ſhall I be with my Saviour and my God."

DIRECT. V. Let Believers, in time of ſickneſs, endeavour all they can to glorify God, and edify thoſe that are about them, by their ſpeech and behaviour.

IF ever a child of God be active to promote the honour and glory of God, it ſhould be in the time of ſickneſs, and when death may be approaching. And there is good reaſon for it; for 1. This may be the laſt opportunity that ever thou ſhalt have to do any thing for God, and therefore thou ſhouldſt ſtudy to improve it to the utmoſt. Heaven, to which thou art going, is the place where thou ſhalt receive thy reward; but thou canſt have no acceſs there to advance God's glory, by commending God and Chriſt, and religion, to ſinners, or weak believers. Upon this account, many of God's children have been content to ſuſpend their heavenly happineſs for a while, and to ſtay upon the earth for ſome longer time. I have read of a certain martyr, when going to ſuffer, who expreſſed ſome ſorrow that he was going thither, where he ſhould do his God no more ſervice, to wit, in the ſenſe above explained. And of another, that ſaith, "If it were poſſible there could be a place for any grief in heaven, it would ariſe from the Chriſtian's conſidering that he did ſo little for God while he was upon earth. Now is the working ſeaſon, O believer, be buſy while it laſts, according to the example of thy bleſſed Saviour, John ix. 4. "I muſt work the work of him that ſent me while it is day; for the night cometh wherein no man can work." This conſideration ſhould make thee move thyſelf with the greateſt activity, like Samſon before his death, who, when he could have no more opportunity to ſerve God and his church, he cried to God and ſaid, Judges xvi. 28. "O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and ſtrengthen me this once." And then he bowed himſelf with all his might, to pull down the pillars of Dagon's temple

temple, being willing to ſacrifice his life to the ruin thereof.

2. The holy ſpeech and carriage of dying believers may, through the bleſſing of God, make deep impreſſion upon the hearts of unregenerate men that are witneſſes to them. Thoſe who have derided the people of God for the ſtrictneſs of their lives, and deſpiſed their counſels and reproofs, as proceeding from humour or preciſeneſs; yet have begun to notice their words and actions, when they have ſeen them on ſick-beds, and on the borders of eternity, and to have other thoughts of religion and holineſs than formerly they had. Now they think the man is in good earneſt, and ſpeaketh the thoughts of his heart; and if ever he can be believed, it muſt be now. It is moſt convincing to carnal perſons, to ſee believers bearing up with patience under their ſickneſs;—to hear them ſpeaking good of God,—commending his ways,—and rejoicing in God as their portion, in midſt of their ſharpeſt pains:—to ſee them behaving as thoſe that are going to dwell with Chriſt, ſmiling and praiſing God, when friends are ſighing and weeping about them. This inclines them to think, ſurely there muſt be a reality in religion, there is a viſible difference between the death of the righteous and of the wicked. Hence a wicked Balaam wiſhes to die the death of the righteous, and to have his laſt end like his. It left a conviction upon that young man's conſcience, who ſaid to his looſe companion, after they had viſited godly Ambroſe on his death-bed, and ſaw how cheerful he was, and triumphing over approaching death, "O that I might live with thee, and die with Ambroſe!" Nay, ſuch ſights might draw them not only to deſire to die the death of the righteous, but alſo to reſolve to live their lives. If carnal men ſaw believers going off the ſtage with ſuch confidence and joy, as becomes thoſe that are entering into eternal reſt with Chriſt, and thoſe that are going out of an howling wilderneſs to a glorious Canaan; it might be a powerful invitation to them to go and ſeek after the ſame felicity.

3. This likewiſe would be very edifying and confirming to all that fear God. How much would it contribute

tribute to eſtabliſh them in the practice of holineſs, and to quicken them in their diligence in ſerving and glorifying of God in the days of their health, to hear a dying believer ſay, "Of all the time which I have lived, I have no comfort now in reflecting upon one hour but what I ſpent in the ſervice of God. Were I to begin my life, I would redeem time more carefully than ever. One hour in communion with God is far ſweeter than many years ſpent in worldly pleaſures. Come here, then, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my ſoul. O taſte and ſee that God is good!"

4. Conſider the examples of God's children in former ages, how uſeful and edifying their words have been, at ſuch a time, to all round about them. But this head I intend to inſiſt fully upon afterwards.

Queſt. "But how ſhall I behave ſo as I may glorify God and edify others, when I am ſick or dying? I would have ſome particular directions for it."

Anſ. 1. You may do this by your patience under pain, and ſubmiſſion to God's will, with reſpect to the event, whether life or death. It is ſtumbling to others, to ſee believers fretful in trouble, and unwilling to leave the world, when God calls them. But it is moſt convincing and confirming, to ſee them frankly reſigning themſelves to God's diſpoſal, ſaying, "Let God himſelf chooſe for me; he is wiſe, and knoweth beſt what is needful and moſt proper for me: I have no will, but God's will." For any man to deſire to live when God calls him to die, or to deſire to die when God calls him to live, is equally a ſign of cowardice: for he that deſires to live is afraid to look death in the face; and he that deſires to die, would flee from ſome calamity, and take ſhelter in death. But he is the moſt valiant man that can die willingly when God would have him die, and live as willingly when God would have him live; this is true Chriſtian valour.

2. By pious exhortations and warnings to thoſe that are about you. It may be the laſt occaſion you may have of glorifying God this way: O do not loſe the ſeaſon which may be uſefully improven for the good of

of ſouls. For thus a believer may bring more honour to God, and more advantage to precious ſouls, by his ſickneſs and death, than ever he did by all his health and life in the world; for their ſpeeches have more weight with people at ſuch a time, than at any other. Hence the patriarchs, knowing the prevalency of ſuch words, do urge Joſeph with Jacob's dying charge, Gen. l. 16, 17. "And they ſent a meſſenger unto Joſeph, ſaying, thy father did command before he died, ſaying, ſo ſhall ye ſay unto Joſeph, forgive, I pray thee now, the treſpaſs of thy brethren," &c. And as we ought to be ready to give good counſel to all when we lie on ſick-beds, ſo eſpecially we ſhould be concerned for children and near relations: they are more affected than others with our ſickneſs, and ſo will they be with our ſayings; our admonitions may do them good, when we are rotting in the duſt.

Quer. "What ought to be the ſubject of our diſcourſes and exhortations to others at ſuch a time?"

Anſ. 1. It is very proper to be much in commending the Maſter you have ſerved, and the excellency of his ſervice, to thoſe that are about you. Tell them of the equity and goodneſs of thoſe laws which you have obeyed, and of the bounty and faithfulneſs of that Lord whom you have worſhipped, loved, and praiſed; and of the greatneſs and eternity of that reward you are going to poſſeſs. Let the children of God extol their Father, and his care of them, and kindneſs to them. Let the ranſomed of the Lord magnify their Redeemer, and his wonderful love and ſufferings for them. Tell others what ſweetneſs and ſatisfaction you have found in your own experience in attending God's ordinances, and in ſecret duties; what comfort you have found in Chriſt, and the promiſes of his covenant. And thus let your laſt breath be ſpent in exalting and commending Chriſt and his religion to others.

2. Be warning others of the vanity of this world, and of all its wealth and pleaſures. Tell them that they may ſee, by your caſe, that theſe things which people are betwitched with in the day of their health, can ſignify nothing to a ſick or dying man; they cannot eaſe

us in our pains, they can afford no peace to a troubled ſoul, they cannot lengthen our lives one hour, and far leſs can they ſave from the wrath of an angry God, "Oh," may you ſay, "what a miſerable caſe had I been in at this time, if I had had no better portion than this world, and nothing elſe to look to but its riches and pleaſures! Wherefore, ſirs, ſet not your hearts upon it, but forſake it before you be forſaken by it, and make choice of that which will be ſupporting to you in the evil day."

3. Be warning them of the evil of ſin, and what miſchief and deceitfulneſs you have found in it Tell them, that though the devil and the fleſh would tempt you to look on ſin as a harmleſs thing, yet the pleaſure will ſoon be gone, and a ſharp ſting will be left behind. Sin will appear no light matter, when the ſoul is going hence into the awful preſence of an holy God. You would give a thouſand worlds then for Chriſt, and the blood of atonement to anſwer for your ſins.

4. Tell them of the great difference between the godly and the wicked man's choice. The godly man chuſeth the better part that cannot be taken from him; he lays up his treaſure in heaven where none can reach it, ſo that it yields him rich ſupplies when ſickneſs and death come upon him. But O how fooliſh is the wicked man's choice, that for one moment's fleſhly pleaſure, doth loſe his immortal ſoul, and everlaſting happineſs; warn them to mind the one thing needful in time, and not to pamper their bodies for the worms, but to ſet themſelves preſently to cloſe with the offers of Chriſt, and make ſure an intereſt in his righteouſneſs to cover them in the evil day.

5. Be telling them of the evil of ſloth and negligence in the work of their ſalvation; and be exhorting them to mind it, and to do it with all their might. For however ſome may cenſure and deride God's people now, for their ſtrictneſs, diligence, and zeal in the matters of religion; yet, when they come to die, they will be ready to wiſh that they had been more diligent in ſalvation-work; that they had loved God, fled to Chriſt, and had ſought and ſerved him with all their hearts, and ſouls; and to cry, "O for a little more time! O if

God would recover and try us once more with health, how diligent would we be! And tell them, that thoſe who have been moſt ſerious, and painful in ſalvation-work, yet, when they come to die, do much lament their ſloth and negligence: yea, thoſe that have been moſt reproached by the world for their diligence and fervency, do often wiſh at that time, "O that we had been a thouſand times more diligent and laborious in God's ſervice!"

6. Labour to perſuade others of the preciouſneſs of time, the wiſdom of improving the time of youth and of health, and the great folly of delaying repentance, and putting it off to a ſick-bed. Say to them, "I find now, by experience, that a time of ſickneſs is a moſt unfit ſeaſon to do any thing to purpoſe for the ſoul; my mind is ſo diverted and indiſpoſed for ſpiritual-work, by ſickneſs and pain, that I cannot attain to any ſuitable compoſure for it. And, how miſerable were I, if I had all my work to begin at this time! O take a warning, and improve precious time, and eſpecially the day of the goſpel, the time of the Spirit's ſtrivings, and the time of youth, which is the moſt uſual ſeaſon of the converſion of ſouls, and of bringing ſinners into acquaintance with Jeſus Chriſt."

DIRECT. VI. Let God's children, when ſick or dying, be expreſſing a great concern for the advancement of the kingdom of Chriſt, and of true Religion in the riſing Generation.

ZEAL, and public ſpiritedneſs, for Chriſt's intereſt, is very becoming his people in all the periods of their life, but more eſpecially at this time. When Chriſt is ready to take you into his kingdom in heaven, O be not unmindful of his kingdom on earth. It would be acceptable to God, and pleaſant in the ſight of men, to ſee you expreſſing a warm concern for the riſing age, and for promoting the welfare of the ſouls of your children, and others that ſurvive you; and ſeeing you can be no longer uſeful to thoſe you leave behind, by your

your counſels, examples or prayers, as formerly; do your utmoſt for them now. And this concern, the children of God in time of ſickneſs may evidence ſeveral ways.

1. By earneſt prayers to God, both for the proſperity of his church and the flouriſhing of religion in general; and alſo for your children and relations in particular, that they may be a holy ſeed, and a generation to ſerve God, and ſhow forth his praiſe in the world, when you are gone off the ſtage.

2. By intruſting the care of your children's education to ſuch tutors and guardians as will be much concerned for their ſouls, and will ſet before them godly examples and inſtructions, in their young and tender years.

3. By filling your latter wills and teſtaments with many pious advices and ſolemn charges to your children and relations, with reſpect to their ſerving God, and worſhipping him in their families and in ſecret, ſo as they can never look into your teſtament, and the legacies left to them, but they will hear ſomething that may be affecting, upſtirring, and edifying to their ſouls.

4. By honouring the Lord with your ſubſtance, and leaving ſomething of what God hath bleſt you with, to pious uſes: particularly for the religious education of the children of the poor, for buying bibles to them, and other excellent books; and for the propagating of Chriſtian Knowledge in ignorant places, ſuch as the Highlands and Iſlands, by erecting and maintaining of ſchools therein: which glorious work is happily begun, and pretty far advanced, by that honourable ſociety at Edinburgh, whoſe treaſurer is ready to receive donations from all ſuch as the Lord pleaſeth to move to make a free-will offering for promoting that pious deſign. Many pious perſons have contributed already thereto; and it were deſirable that others, whom God hath enabled for it, ſhould mind it before they die; for by fatal experience we may obſerve, that the moſt godly parents do not know how their children will employ the eſtate they leave them, whether as fuel for their

luſts, or as oil to feed the lamps in God's ſanctuary. It is proper for themſelves, then, before they go off the ſtage, to diſpoſe of ſome part of their ſubſtance, for the glory and ſervice of that God who gave it all unto them.

5. It might contribute to promote piety, and to make the deeper impreſſions upon the minds of your children and friends, if, under the warnings of death, you ſhould imitate the example of the prophet Elijah, who in his life time made a writing, which he procured to be delivered to king Jehoram, after his death, 2 Chron. xxi. 12. So, in like manner, you might write letters and leave them in the hands of your friends, and executors, full of advices, charges, admonitions, conſolations, or threatenings, to be delivered to your children or friends, upon occaſion either of their good or bad converſation after your death; which probably would be more regarded by them, than the counſels you gave them in the time of your life; for, in ſome reſpect, they would be received and read by them, as if they were letters from heaven.

DIRECT. VII. Let the children of God labour to fortify themſelves what they can againſt all Satan's Temptations and Aſſaults, which they may expect to meet with in time of Sickneſs and Affliction.

A TIME of affliction is commonly a time of temptation: for the old ſerpent knows the fitteſt ſeaſon for aſſaulting the children of God; and he will not be wanting to improve this opportunity of advantage for ſetting upon the poor ſoul. When Pharaoh heard that the people were entangled in the wilderneſs, he purſued them; ſo, when Satan ſees a ſoul entangled with diſtreſs and troubles, he thinks it high time to make an attack. He ſeeks to winnow and ſift away the believer's grace, and therefore he comes when the corn is threſhing by the rod. When Jacob was ſmitten in his eſtate, health, and all other comforts, then this coward

coward falls upon him, and tempts him to impatience, murmuring, and wrong thoughts of God.

At this time, O believer, you have ſpecial need to be on your guard, and look out. Reckon always, when ſickneſs or trouble cometh, the prince of this world cometh alſo. Stand then to your defence, and put on your armour, eſpecially the ſhield of faith, that you may be able to quench the fiery darts of the devil. You have need at this time to put in practice our Lord's direction, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." Pray for wiſdom and ſkill to counteract him, and that you may not be ignorant of his devices; and pray particularly for grace to make you proof againſt all his falſe repreſentations of God and his Providence to you; for he that durſt repreſent Job falſely to an all-ſeeing and all-knowing God, will, with much boldneſs, repreſent God falſely to you, who ſee and know ſo little. He will be ready to tempt you to think that God is angry with you, and dealing with you as an enemy: thus was Job tempted, Job xxxiii. 10, 11. "Behold he findeth occaſions againſt me, he counteth me for his enemy: he putteth my feet in the ſtocks, he marketh all my paths." But obſerve what Elihu anſwers, "In this thou art not juſt: God is greater than man. Why doſt thou ſtrive againſt him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters." But ſeeing I ſpoke before of the wrong thoughts of God, which we are apt to harbour in time of affliction, Chap. II. Direct. III.—I ſhall proceed to ſpeak of ſome other temptations wherewith Satan doth aſſault God's people when in diſtreſs; and furniſh ſome anſwers thereto.

1. Saith the tempter, "Thou art nothing but a hypocrite; all thy religious performances have been done in hypocriſy, to be ſeen of men: thou never haſt repented, or believed ſincerely in the ſight of God."

Anſ. I acknowledge there hath been much hypocriſy in me, but I hope it is not allowed and reigning hypocriſy; I always wreſtled againſt it, wherefore I am not an hypocrite. I regarded the eſteem of men too much, but I hope I valued the eſteem of God much more.

My

My faith and repentance are weak, but I hope they are ſincere. And, whatever defects and ſhort-comings have formerly cleaved to theſe graces in me, I do now unfeignedly repent of all my ſins, I look to him that I have pierced, and mourn. I am heartily willing to be juſtified by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt alone, and to be cleanſed and ſanctified by his Spirit; and here I give up myſelf to Chriſt as my only Saviour. And this I hope is through grace, true repenting and believing, which God will accept, for Chriſt's ſake, whatever my former defects have been.

Tempt. 2. But, ſaith the tempter, "Thy repentance cannot be true; for thy heart is not broken, and thine eyes do not ſhed tears for ſin."

Anſ. It is my very great burden, and conſtant complaint to God, that I cannot attain to a greater meaſure of ſorrow and contrition for ſin; but yet it is my comfort that repentance is not to be confined to ſuch degrees and ſymptoms of ſorrows as ſome do get at. I hope, I can ſay through grace, that my heart is ſet againſt all ſin great and ſmall, and I would give all I have in the world to be wholly delivered from ſin.

Tempt. 3. Saith the tempter, "But thy day of grace is paſt, it is too late for thee to think of repenting or believing; God will not accept of thee now."

Anſ. But I hope it is not ſo with me, ſeeing God gives me a heart that pants after God and Chriſt in the way of commanded duty. The offers of ſalvation through Chriſt are made to all who believe and repent; and late penitents are not excluded from the benefits of theſe gracious offers more than others.

Tempt. 3. But, ſaith the tempter, "Thou art none of God's elect; and, if thou be not choſen to ſalvation, thou cannot be ſaved."

Anſ. Secret things belong unto God, and it were preſumption in me to pry into his ſecret degrees; but one thing I am ſure of, that every ſoul that is choſen to faith and repentance, is alſo choſen to ſalvation; but I truſt God hath choſen me to the former, and therefore to the latter.

Tempt.

Tempt. 5. But, ſaith the tempter, "You over-value your graces and duties, and ſo they cannot be true and real."

Anſ. But I count them all but loſs and dung in compariſon of Chriſt. I deſire always to be deeply humbled under a ſenſe of my ſinfulneſs and unworthineſs, and to abhor every motion that would carry me away from Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, and would tempt me to rely on my graces or duties, or put them in the leaſt in Chriſt's room.

Tempt. 6. "The iſſue of thy ſickneſs may be death, and thou art not ready, for thou haſt no aſſurance of thy ſalvation."

Anſ. A perfect certainty is not to be expected here: there will be ſtill ſome queſtionings, ſome doubts and fears; but theſe I reſolve not to indulge now, but to break through all, that I may embrace Chriſt, and be found in him. The deſires of my ſoul are to Chriſt, and the remembrance of his name; and ſuch, I believe, he will not ſuffer to periſh. "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief."

Tempt. 7. "But thou art a ſtranger to the inviſible world; how wilt thou adventure into that world of ſpirits, with which thou haſt ſo little acquaintance?"

Anſ. But Chriſt, who is my Head and beſt friend, is no ſtranger to it; he is the Lord of that land, and provides manſions for all his people there; and he will receive every one of them home, and lodge them ſafely. "The ſpirits of juſt men made perfect," were once what my ſpirit now is; they were ſtrangers to that world before they came to it, as well as I. But their Head being in it, encouraged them to go to it; and now they rejoice in it as the kindly dwelling place of all the ſaints.

Tempt. 8. "But thou art vile, and God is infinitely pure and glorious; how canſt thou think of approaching ſo near to him?"

Anſ. Though a weak eye be not able to look upon the ſun, yet I hope to be fitted and ſtrengthened for that glorious ſight. Beſides, God doth now appear to us in his Son Jeſus Chriſt, where his infinite glory is pleaſantly

ſantly veiled ſo as ſaints may behold him. Theſe glorified ſouls were once vile as well as others; but their Saviour did cleanſe them, and preſent them to the Father without ſpot or wrinkle. And, whatever be my unworthineſs, I am relieved by conſidering my union with Chriſt, and looking on the glory and dignity of my Head. Surely God will not deſpiſe the members of his dear Son, nor trample on any that are his fleſh and bones.

Tempt. 9. "But what will become of thy wife and children, when thou art taken from them?"

Anſ. If I truſt God ſo willingly with my ſoul and my eternal concerns, why may I not truſt him with my relations alſo? Have not I ſeen how wonderfully he hath provided for others? Doth not every thing in the world depend on his will and pleaſure? How eaſy is it then for God to ſupply his own?

Tempt. 10. "But ſtill death is terrible to nature, even the king of terrors."

Anſ. But my Redeemer hath taſted death for me, and taken out its fearful ſting; he hath conquered death, and keeps the keys of death and hell. Wherefore, through him will I ſing, "O death, where is thy ſting! O grave, where is thy victory?"

Tempt. 11. "But it is terrible to think of appearing before God's tribunal to be tried and judged."

Anſ. But my friend and interceſſor will be the judge there. Will Chriſt condemn the members of his own body, and theſe he hath ſo often comforted?

But, beſides all theſe, a holy God may ſome times ſuffer the tempter to aſſault his own people in time of their affliction, with his fiery darts and his fierceſt battering engines, ſuch as temptations to atheiſm, blaſphemy, deſpair, &c. whereby their ſouls may be terribly ſhaken and ſore amazed.

Your relief, in this caſe, is to look to your Head, and remember how he was himſelf buffeted by this enemy, and aſſaulted with the moſt odious temptations, that he might thereby get an experimental touch and feeling of your condition, in order to his ſympathizing with you, and

and relieving you from this enemy, whom he hath already conquered in your name. But for theſe things he will be enquired of by the houſe of Iſrael. You muſt act faith on your exalted head.

CHAP. IV.

Containing ſome ſpecial directions to unregenerate perſons when afflicted with ſickneſs or otherwiſe.

DIRECT. I. Take a ſerious view of the miſerable condition of a Chriſtleſs perſon, under ſickneſs or heavy affliction.

1*ſt*, CONSIDER the vaſt difference between your caſe and that of a true believer; he hath ground of conſolation in the greateſt diſtreſs, but you have none. However ſharp the rod of correction be to him, yet it is in the hand of a Father; but you have to do with an angry and ſin-revenging God; and, who may ſtand in his ſight if once he be angry; for he commands both the firſt and the ſecond death, and he can ſend you both into the grave and hell at once, Rev. vi. 8. "Hell followed the pale horſe." Death is the king of terrors, but hell is a thouſand times more terrible. When God afflicts his children, he ſtands to them in the relation of a loving Father; but he deals with you as an incenſed judge. Though he ſees it neceſſary, for their good, to chaſtiſe them, yet he doth it with a relenting heart; yea, every ſtroke goeth as it were to his heart, Iſa. lxiii. 9. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted." But when he ariſeth to puniſh his enemies, he ſtrikes them with hatred and deſtation, as a man would do to a toad or venomous creature. Though they cry he hath no pity, Prov. i. 26. "I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh."

2*dly*, If your ſickneſs threaten you with death, what a dark and melancholy proſpect muſt you have of your

approaching change? Why, O Chriſtleſs ſoul, it is what you are wholly unprepared for. The old houſe falls down about your ears, before you have another lodging provided. When death caſts you to the door, you have no where to lay your head, unleſs it be on a bed of fire and brimſtone. O how ſurpriſing and fearful will the change be, that death will make on you! A change from earth to hell, from light to darkneſs from comforts to terrors, from hope to deſpair, from the offers of grace to the revelation of wrath; a change from the ſociety of the ſaints on earth, to the company of the damned in hell. Whatever fond hopes of ſalvation you have now, your hope ſhall lead you no further than to the king of terrors, and then "your hope ſhall be cut off, and your truſt, like a ſpider's web," Job viii. 14. Though it coſt you much pains to weave and ſupport this web now, it will prove a weak and ſlender defence to your ſoul, when death comes with the beſom of deſtruction, and ſweeps both you and it away to hell. You will then be taken from all the means of grace you have abuſed, and be for ever deprived of an opportunity of buying oil; your lamp ſhall go out at death, and never be lighted any more.

3. In this extremity, you have no where to look to for comfort. O Chriſtleſs ſinner, what will you do in the day of viſitation? To whom will you flee for help? Your houſes, your lands, your money, your honours, your companions, your relations, will all be miſerable comforters to you. Every thing will look black and diſmal round about you. If you look without you for help, you may ſee your friends weeping and lamenting your caſe; but this will do nothing but increaſe your vexation and miſery. If you look within you for relief, conſcience, that before you would not ſuffer to ſpeak, will meet you with bitter ſtings and upbraidings. It will bring to your view the ſins you had forgot, the time you have miſpent, the health you have miſimproven, the offers of grace you have refuſed, the great ſalvation you have neglected. What folly was it for thee to provoke God and ſlight Chriſt, for a little worldly profit, or a little brutiſh pleaſure? Can theſe relieve

relieve thee when the arrows of the Almighty ſtick within thee, and the terrors of God do ſet themſelves in array againſt thy ſoul? In the mean time, the devil that tempted you to your ſoul-ruining courſe, will ſtep in and repreſent your ſins in their blackeſt colours and aggravations, to render you altogether hopeleſs and deſperate. O ſinner, thou that refuſeſt reſt from Chriſt, in the day of health and grace, ſhalt find no eaſe from the creature in the day of ſickneſs and death. Your ſickneſs will allow no reſt to your body, and your ſins will permit no eaſe to your ſoul. You may expect the fulfilling of that threatening, Deut. xxviii. 65. "The Lord ſhall give thee a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and ſorrow of mind. And thy life ſhall hang in doubt before thee, and thou ſhalt have fear day and night. In the morning thou ſhalt ſay, would to God it were even? and at even, thou ſhalt ſay, would to God it were morning," becauſe of the pain of thy body, and anguiſh of thy ſpirit.

DIRECT. II. Let unregenerate Perſons carefully improve their ſickneſs and affliction, as means to further their Converſion; and pray that God may bleſs it for that end.

MANY have begun their acquaintance with God and with themſelves in the time of affliction; the furnace is frequently the ſpirit's work houſe where he forms his veſſels of praiſe. There are many who, while health and ſtrength continue, mind nothing but vain pleaſures; one day they go to their games and ſports, another to their cups and laſcivious company; another day to viſit their friends; and thus they ſpend the whole time of their health and proſperity in ſin and vanity. All the warnings, counſels and exhortation of parents, friends and miniſters do them no good. They cannot endure to entertain a ſerious thought of God or Chriſt, of death, of heaven, of hell, or judgment to come. But, when God doth caſt them

into ſickneſs or ſome great affliction, they, through the bleſſing of God, begin to come to themſelves, like the prodigal, and think of returning again to their father. Several inſtances to this purpoſe might be given. The Earl of Rocheſter is a late one, whoſe life was notoriouſly lewd, profane and atheiſtical, and who had wickedly employed his wit and parts to the ridicule of religion; yet, when he was afflicted with pain and ſickneſs, and brought to the gates of death, he began to entertain quite other apprehenſions than he had done before; he profeſſed he had ſerious and reverent thoughts of religion and holineſs, which before he laughed at; he moſt earneſtly and affectionately warned others to abandon their evil courſes, and to live religiouſly and ſoberly, and to look upon religion as the greateſt reality in the world; he retracted all his impious and profane language, wherewith he uſed to reflect on the ways of godlineſs, and willingly atteſted all this under his hand.

Pray then for the Divine bleſſing on your ſickneſs, that it may contribute to the converſion of your ſoul, which it doth ſeveral ways: 1ſt, By opening mens eyes to get a true ſight of things, to behold religion in its true ſhape, and ſin in its proper colours; hence the rod is ſaid to give wiſdom, Prov. xxix. 15. They who have mocked at religion, and made light of ſin all their days, have been taught by bodily ſickneſs to change their tune. Then they begin to have an eſteem for the Bible, and to value and ſend for a pious miniſter, and to deſire the prayers of the people of God; now they perceive ſin to be bitter as gall and wormwood; they loathe and abhor that which they liked before; now the word of God makes a deep impreſſion on them, and particularly ſuch a word as that, Jer. ii. 19. "Know therefore and ſee that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God."

2, Sickneſs helps to ſet the word preached home upon the heart. When God ſpeaks to us in the day of health and proſperity, we often give him a deaf ear, Jer. xxii. 21. But when diſtreſs comes, it brings the word

word of God and his miniſters to our remembrance, as it brought Joſeph to the remembrance of his brethren, Gen. xlii. 21.

3. Sickneſs contributes to looſe a man's heart from the world, and to cool his love thereto; whereby a great hindrance of converſion is removed out of the way, and the man is made to ſay, "How vain and helpleſs are the world's comforts to me now! Thoſe things I delighted in formerly, are taſteleſs to me at this time. There is no portion can ſuit my ſoul's needs, but God himſelf."

4. It ſpurs a man on to prayer that formerly neglected it. When the prodigal is brought to diſtreſs, he ſays, "I will ariſe and go to my Father." He forgot his father before, but now he will addreſs him, Hoſ. v. 15. "In their affliction they will ſeek me early." Thus the Lord frequently begins and promotes the converſion of ſouls to himſelf. And, O ſinner, if this be the fruit of thy ſickneſs, it will not be unto death, but the glory of God.

DIRECT. III. Be careful to obey God's voice in the Rod, and beware of ſlighting it.

EVERY ſickneſs hath a meſſage from God, and his voice you ought to hearken to with reverence and attention, Mic. vi 9. What ſaith he to you at this time? O ſinner, he ſaith, "Retire from the world, think on death and eternity, abhor thoſe luſt and idols which God is ſmiting you for, flee ſpeedily to the ſtrong-hold; repent and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out." This is God's voice to you, and conſider how provoking it will be to him, if you ſlight it.

1. You will provoke God to ſlight your voice when you cry to him, and ſtop his ear againſt the voice of your ſupplications, Zech. vii. 13.

2. You will provoke God to ceaſe from being a reprover to you, ſo that he will ſpeak to you no more.

3. You will provoke him to bring heavier judgments on you; yea, ſo to draw his ſword of juſtice againſt you,

you, that he will ſheath it up no more, as he threatens, Ezek. xxi. 5.

4. God may break off all intercourſe and correſpondence with you, as with thoſe, Ezek. xx. 31. "As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I will not be enquired of by you"

5. He may ſeal you up for ever under your ſins, hardneſs and pollution; and ſay to you, as ſome we read of, Ezek. xxiv. 13. Hoſ. iv. 7. Rev. xxii. 11. "Becauſe I have purged thee, and thou waſt not purged, thou ſhalt not be purged from thy filthineſs any more, till I have cauſed my fury to reſt upon thee. Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone. He that is filthy let him be filthy ſtill." He that is hardened againſt the voice of my rods, let him be hardened ſtill. Well, then, O ſinners, while God is in ſpeaking terms with you, hearken to his voice, and obey it; ſay, Lord, "What wilt thou have me to do?"

DIRECT. IV. Caſt back your eyes upon the Sins of your bypaſt life, and labour to be deeply humbled for them before the Lord.

SEEING you are ſummoned to prepare for going to the judgment ſeat of God, where your ſoul is to receive its final ſentence; labour to prevent the terror of that appearance, by your judging yourſelf before-hand. And this you muſt do, by ſummoning yourſelf before the bar of conſcience, examining narrowly into your ſtate, accuſing and condemning yourſelf for your ſins. And ſee that you be impartial in this work, willing to know the truth, and diſcover the worſt of your caſe. You muſt ſee and be duly ſenſible of your danger, otherwiſe you cannot think to eſcape it. Take a narrow view of your ſins in their nature, number, aggravations, and deſervings. And, in order to this, if thou haſt any meaſure of ſtrength for it, let the expoſition of the ten commandments in our Larger Catechiſm be diſtinctly read over unto thee. Make a pauſe upon every queſtion,

queſtion, and ſay within thyſelf, " Have I not omitted what is here required by God? And, have I not committed what is here forbidden by God? How often have I repeated theſe ſins? How long have I lived in the practice of them? O! do not ſo many years ſins need a very ſerious repentance, a very deep humiliation? O! doth not ſuch a vile ſinner as I, ſtand greatly in need of Chriſt to be my cautioner and ranſomer for ſuch a vaſt number of ſins? Will not their weight preſs me eternally down to the loweſt hell, if they remain unpardoned, and be laid upon my back?" Wherefore view them cloſely, and confeſs them particularly before God.

1. In the firſt place, bewail thy original ſin, the fountain of all thy actual tranſgreſſions, as did David, Pſal. li. 5. " Behold I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me."

2. Acknowledge and mourn over the ſinful outbreakings of thy life, whereby thou haſt diſhonoured God, and grieved his Holy Spirit; and eſpecially ſins againſt light.

3. Be humbled for thy ſins of omiſſion, for neglecting of commanded duties, particularly for the neglect of prayer in ſecret, and of family-religion.

4. Mourn for the loſs of precious time. Alas for the time of youth miſ-ſpent, many Sabbath-days trifled away!

5. Lament thy long ſlighting of Chriſt, and ſalvation through his righteouſneſs, which ſo preſſingly hath been offered to thee in the goſpel.

6. Bewail thy ſtifling the convictions, and quenching the motions of the Spirit, and thereby provoking him to depart from you.

7. Mourn for thy unthankfulneſs to God for mercies and deliverances, which might have allured you to repentance and newneſs of life.

8. Confeſs thy ſtubbornneſs under former afflictions, which hath provoked God to ſend new trials upon you.

9. Be humbled for thy earthly mindedneſs, in that thou haſt all thy days been careful and cumbered about many things, and haſt neglected the one thing neceſſary.

10. Mourn

10. Mourn for the lateneſs of thy repentance, and thy prodigious folly in delaying ſo long to bethink thyſelf, and turn to the Lord. "Oh how unwiſely have I acted, to miſ-ſpend the time of health, and delay ſo great a work till now, that I am laid on a ſick-bed! And now, if I die before I am converted, I am loſt forever. O Lord, I am aſhamed and confounded at my madneſs and folly, and have no excuſe to plead for myſelf, but muſt ſtand afar off, with the poor publican, and ſmite upon my breaſt, and cry, "God be merciful to me a ſinner."

DIRECT. V. Flee preſently to Jeſus Chriſt by a true faith, and cloſe with him as offered to you in the goſpel.

ART thou ſenſible, O ſinner, of thy grievous guilt and ill-deſervings before God? then do not deſpair; for Jeſus Chriſt, who hath offered to Divine juſtice an all-ſufficient ſacrifice for ſin, is offering himſelf to thee, ſaying, O diſtreſſed ſinner, "Look unto me and be ſaved; turn unto me, why will you die? Come unto me, heavy-laden ſoul, and I will give you reſt. He that cometh to me, I will in nowiſe caſt out." Will not ſo gracious words, ſuch moving calls, melt thy heart within thee, and make thee cry to him, "Lord Jeſus, I flee to thee as my refuge. for deliverance from ſin, and protection from the wrath to come; I look to thy wounds, I truſt in thy righteouſneſs, I depend on thy merit, I lie at thy feet, and this I am reſolved to do as long as I have a breath to draw in the world."

DIRECT.

DIRECT. IV. Call for the Elders of the Church, that they may pray over you in your Sickness.

THIS is the Apostle James's directions to the sick, James v. 14. He doth not say, if any be sick, let him send for the physicians, but for the elders or ministers. It is true, physicians are to be called, but not in the first place. It was Asa's fault, that in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians; and, alas! how many follow his example? ministers are only called for in the last place, and very often when the time is past, the sick being at the point of death, and scarce capable to speak or hear. But if you desire to reap benefit by the instructions and prayers of ministers, call for them timeously, and open your case unto them; seek their counsel, and beg for their prayers. It is their office to teach and pray for you, and they have authority to offer salvation to you through Christ, and to minister comfort to them that are cast down; wherefore a blessing may be expected on their administrations and performances more than others. Hence God said to Abimelech of Abraham, Gen. xx. 7. "He is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee." And to Job's friends, concerning Job, Job xlii 8. "Go to my servant Job, and he shall pray for you, for him will I accept; lest that I deal with you after your folly." And,

Lastly, Remember, that as the apostle James enjoins the sick to call for the elders to pray over them, so at the same time he directs you, James v. 16. to confess your faults one to another, Christian to Christian, one friend to another, the people to their minister. Not that this gives any warrant for the Papists their auricular confessions, which they force upon all men, to their priests, as a satisfaction for sin, and whereby they rack their consciences (when they feel no distress) to confess their most secret sins, to enumerate them all under pain of damnation, and which they use as a politic to dive into the secrets of princes, states, and all private persons: but, as Luther, Calvin, Beza, and many others of orthodox divines do teach, it is very profitable and ne-

ceſſary for thoſe that are inwardly troubled with a ſenſe of their ſins, to eaſe and diſburden their conſciences, by confeſſion of them to the faithful miniſters of Chriſt, in order to their receiving ſuitable counſels and conſolations from them, ſuch as Chriſt had left in his word for contrite-hearted penitents.

Thus let every man in ſickneſs uſe all appointed means for preparing his ſoul for a future ſtate. Thy preparation will by no means haſten death, but ſweeten it to you. Death muſt ſurely have a moſt formidable aſpect to an unprepared ſinner; he may ſalute it, as Ahab did Elijah. "Haſt thou found me, O mine enemy?" Why? it brings heavy and doleful tidings to him. But a prepared ſoul may ſalute death, welcome, O my friend! thou bringeſt me tidings of great joy; everlaſting deliverance from ſin, and all the bitter fruits of it. I ſhall never complain of theſe any more.

CHAP. V.

Containing directions to the people of God, when the Lord is pleaſed to recover them from Sickneſs and Diſtreſs.

DIRECT. I. It is very proper, both under ſickneſs and after it, to examine if the affliction be ſanctified to you, and hath come from the love of God.

IT would be very comfortable for us to know that the afflictions which God viſits us with, are not the puniſhment of a judge, but the chaſtiſement of a father; that they do not proceed from wrath, but from love; that they are not curſes, but bleſſings to us. Now the beſt way of knowing this is by the effects which they work and produce in us, through the bleſſing of God.

1. Canſt thou ſay, that thy affliction hath humbled thee in the ſight of God, and made thee confeſs and bewail

bewail thy ſins and ſtrayings from God as the procuring cauſe thereof? hath it been like Moſes's rod, that ſmote the rock, and brought out much water? Did you water your couch with tears, and mourn humbly before God for all thy God-provoking ſins? then it is a good ſign ſickneſs is ſanctified.

2. Doth thy affliction drive thee nearer God, and cauſe thee aim at cloſer communion with God in duty than formerly, ſaying, "however careleſs and overly I have been in duty in time paſt, it is ſurely good for me now to draw near to God?" Then thy ſickneſs is a bleſſing to thee.

3. Affliction is ſanctified, when the corruption and deceitfulneſs of the heart is the more diſcovered and laid open to the view of the ſoul; ſo as the man is made to abhor himſelf in duſt and aſhes, and cry out as the leper, "unclean, unclean." I never could have thought my heart ſo wicked as now I ſee it.

4. It is a ſanctified ſickneſs that purgeth the heart, and changeth the life, and gives a dead ſtroke to thy ſins and idols, and makes thee to lothe and abhor them more than ever, ſaying, with Ephraim, "What have I to do any more with idols?"

5. It is a bleſſed rod, when grace is more quickened and ſtirred up thereby, and the man turns more fruitful in holy duties and good works; when it is a budding and bloſſoming rod, like to Aaron's, Numb. xvii. It is recorded there of Aaron's rod, that it brought forth buds, bloomed bloſſoms, and yielded almonds. So it is happy with us, when our rods and ſickneſſes do produce in us, not only the buds of a profeſſion, or the bloſſoms or ſome beginnings of a reformations, but even cauſe us to yield almonds, fruit ſavoury to God. Is conſcience become more tender with reſpect to ſin? Are we more jealous over our hearts? Are we more fervent in prayer, more lively in praiſe, more mortified to the world, more deſirous of communion with God? then may we ſay with David, "It is good for us that we have been afflicted;" and with Hezekiah, "thou haſt, in love to my ſoul, delivered it from the pit of corruption."

DIRECT. II. Make conſcience of offering to God the ſacrifice of Thankſgiving, upon his recovering thee from ſickneſs, or any diſtreſs.

THE Pſalmiſt gives us this direction from God, Pſ. l. 14, 15; and he ſhews us that it was his own practice in ſuch a caſe, Pſ. cxvi. 17. Pſ. ciii. 1, 2, 3. &c. The command is juſt, let us obey it;—the example is excellent, let us imitate it. Praiſe is comely for the upright. Here I ſhall give ſome motives and advices.

1. God, who is the author of all thy mercies and deliverances, gives you tongues for this very end, that you may bleſs and praiſe him for thoſe mercies, James iii. 9. Hence man's tongue is called his glory above the reſt of the creatures, Pſ. lvii. 8. There is none in the creation ſo endued and qualified for praiſing God as man is. Angels have reaſon and minds whereby they adore and admire God's goodneſs and excellency, but have no tongues to praiſe him; beaſts have tongues without ſpeech or reaſon to uſe them: but man hath both reaſon and ſpeech, that he may both admire God's goodneſs, and with his tongue ſound forth God's praiſe. See then, O believer, that you uſe your tongue to anſwer the end of your creation. God loſeth his due rent of praiſe from the reſt of the world, but he expects it from his children, whom he hath formed for this end, and on whom he hath beſtowed many diſtinguiſhing favours.

2. The ſacrifice of thankſgiving is moſt pleaſing and acceptable to God. He loves your tears and prayers O believer, but much more your praiſes. How well pleaſed was our Lord with the poor leper Samaritan, that returned and gave him thanks for curing his bodily diſtemper? Luke xvii. He diſmiſſed him with a ſpecial bleſſing, and cured him of his ſoul's diſeaſes, as well as of his body's. And, therefore,

3. Conſider that thankfulneſs for thy mercies received is a more profitable courſe for yourſelf; for it is the way to get more and better bleſſings beſtowed upon you

you, according to Pſ. lxvii. 5. 6. "Let the people praiſe thee, O God. Then ſhall the earth yield her increaſe; and God, even our own God, ſhall bleſs us." Thankſgiving for former mercies is a kindly way of petitioning for new favours, and God will underſtand it in this ſenſe.

4. God is ſo well pleaſed with the duty of thankſgiving, that he honours it to be the eternal work of heaven. Whereas other graces, ſuch as faith, hope, and repentance, will then be melted into love and joy for ever; ſo other duties of worſhip, ſuch as reading, hearing, and prayer, will then be changed into that of praiſe and thankſgiving: The glorified company above will never be weary of this work; and ſhall we not delight in it now; when God is calling us to it by ſo many new mercies?

In the next place, that thou mayeſt offer the ſacrifice of thankſgiving to God for thy recovery, with gracious acceptance, I ſhall lay before you the following advices:

1. See that your heart be touched with the ſenſe of the greatneſs of the mercy and of the goodneſs of God manifeſted therein. We muſt put a due value upon our mercies, and have our hearts affected with God's kind dealing towards us in them, if we would be rightly thankful to God the author of them. Hence it was that David called upon his heart and all within him, to bleſs the Lord for his benefits, Pſ. ciii. 1. and in Pſ. cxxviii. 1. he ſaith, "I will praiſe thee with my whole heart." As, in an inſtrument of muſic, the more the ſound comes out of the belly of it, it is the more ſweet, ſo our praiſe is the more acceptable to God, when the heart is full of gracious affections.

2. Let your praiſe be the native reſult of faith and love in your ſoul, otherwiſe it will be but an empty ſound. Faith is neceſſary to draw by the veil, and ſhew us the perfections of the viſible God, who is the ſpring and author of all our mercies; love gives a deep ſenſe of his goodneſs, enlargeth the heart towards God, and opens the lips to ſhow forth his praiſes.

3. Study to have a deep ſenſe of your own unworthineſs and ill-deſervings at the Lord's hand, upon the account

count of your ſins and ill-improvement of former deliverances, ſaying, with Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 10. "I am not worthy of the leaſt of all thy mercies."

4. Look above inſtruments and ſecond cauſes, and do not aſcribe your recovery to phyſicians or outward means, but to the Lord, the prime author of it, whoſe bleſſing alone it is that gives efficacy and ſucceſs to the appointed means, and by whoſe mercy only we are ſpared and brought back from the gates of the grave. To this the Apoſtle attributes Epaphroditus his recovery, Phil. ii. 27. "Indeed he was ſick nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him." Hence we are told, 1 Sam. ii. 6. "The Lord bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up."

5. Obſerve narrowly the remarkable circumſtances of the Lord's goodneſs, and the ſweet ingredients of thy mercies: As, for inſtance, (1.) How diſcernible the Lord's hand was in thy deliverance, which obligeth thee to ſay, Surely this is the finger of God? This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in mine eyes. (2.) How thy deliverance came to thee as the return of prayer, that makes thee ſay, Surely he is a prayer-hearing God. (3.) How deliverances came when there was but little ground to hope for it. See how Hezekiah obſerved this ingredient in his recovery from ſickneſs, Iſa. xxxviii. 10. 11. "I ſaid in the cutting off of my days, I ſhall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the reſidue of my years. I ſaid, I ſhall not ſee the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living: I ſhall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world." Ver. 15. "What ſhall I ſay? He hath both ſpoken to me, and himſelf hath done it." Some times God ſends deliverances to his people when they are moſt hopleſs, and ſaying with the captives in Babylon, Ezek. xxxvii. 11. "Behold our bones are dried, and our hopes are loſt, and we are cut off for our parts. (4.) Remember how the extremity of thy diſtreſs was God's opportunity of ſending relief. Abraham never forgot the ſeaſonableneſs of God's appearing for him in his extreme need upon mount Moriah, when he called the name of the place Jehovah Jireh, for

for preſerving the memorial of it: "in the mountain of the Lord it will be ſeen." So doth David, Pſal. cxxvi. "I was brought low and he helped me."

6. Let the preſent deliverance bring all former mercies to thy remembrance, that ſo thou mayeſt praiſe God for them all, whether they be national or perſonal mercies, public or private, ſpiritual or temporal. New mercies ſhould revive the memory of the old, and all of them ſhould come above board at ſuch a time; ſo doth the Pſalmiſt direct, Pſal. cv. 2. "Sing to the Lord, talk ye of all his wondrous works." And what he directs others to, he practiſeth himſelf in ſuch a caſe, Pſal. cxvi. 12. "What ſhall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?"

7 Be ready to communicate to others an account of the Lord's kind dealings towards you, and the ſweet ingredients of his mercies; and particularly of his ſending ſpiritual deliverance to your ſoul, as well as outward deliverance to your body, when he is pleaſed to do ſo: and do this in order to recommend the ſervice of God to others, and to engage and invite them to aſſiſt you in bleſſing and praiſing the Lord. We ſee how David obſerved his ſoul's deliverance, Pſal. cxvi. 7, 8. and declares his experience to others, Pſal. xxii. 22. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midſt of the congregation will I praiſe thee." Pſal. lxvi. 16. "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my ſoul."

Laſtly, Remember always to give thanks for mercies to the Father in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as directed, Eph. v. 20. Your ſpiritual ſacrifices are only acceptable to God, when you offer them up by Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Pet. ii. 5. As we muſt ſeek all our mercies in Chriſt's name, ſo we muſt give thanks for them alſo in his name. He is the Mediator of our praiſes as well as of our prayers. Believers have not one mercy, but what comes ſwimming to them in Chriſt's blood, and is the fruit of his death and purchaſe to them; and therefore he is to be owned and looked to in the receiving of every mercy. And as Chriſt is the only Mediator for conveying bleſſings and mercies from God

God to us, ſo he is the ſole Mediator for conveying a our ſervices and ſpiritual ſacrifices to God. God ac cepts of them only as they are perfumed by Chriſt meritorious ſacrifice and potent interceſſion.

DIRECT. III. When the Lord is pleaſed to gran thee any ſignal mercy or deliverance from trouble beware of forgetting the Lord's kindneſs toward thee.

FORGETTING of God's remarkable kind provi dences, is an evil we are naturally prone unto, when w are in a proſperous ſtate. Hence it is, that the Spiri of God gives ſo many cautions againſt it in his word and the ſaints of God do ſo ſolemnly charge their ow ſouls to beware of it, as in Pſal. ciii. 2. "Bleſs th Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits; wh healeth all thy diſeaſes, who redeemeth thy life from deſtruction." Forget not his benefits, but carefull preſerve and treaſure them up in thy memory. It wa uſual for ſaints under the Old Teſtament, to ſet up ſom viſible monument to remind them of God's ſingular fa vours to them; they erected ſtones, and built altars, t be memorials of the mercies they received, and pu names on the places for this end. Let all this teac you to guard againſt this evil of forgetting the Lord' kind providence in recovering you from ſickneſs.

You are guilty of this evil, when you do not duly value the mercy, but let it paſs as a turn of commor providence. When you let the impreſſion of the mercy wear ſoon off your hearts; when you make a bad uſe of it, or do not rightly improve it to God's glory, and your own ſoul's good; when you do not put on new reſolutions to walk more exactly, live more fruitfully and ſerve God more holily and humbly; then are you guilty of forgetting his benefits.

This is an evil moſt grievous and provoking to a good and gracious God, as is evident from the man heav

heavy complaints he makes of his people for it, as in Judg. viii. 34. Pſal. lxxviii. 11. Pſal. cvi. 13. Wherefore watch and pray againſt it.

DIRECT. IV. Enquire after the fruits of righteouſneſs, which are the genuine effects of affliction in the children of God, who are duly exerciſed thereby.

THE Apoſtle ſpeaks of theſe fruits, Heb. xii. 11. as natively following upon ſanctified afflictions, and a kindly exerciſe of ſpirit under them. And therefore it is your duty to enquire if they be produced in you.

1. The increaſe of true repentance is one of thoſe fruits which is the product of ſanctified trials. Job found it in himſelf on the back of his afflictions, Job xlii. 6. "Now I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes." It would be happy if we could find our hearts more ſoft and melting upon the view of ſin, after we have been in the furnace of affliction.

2. Another fruit is the improvement of faith. The afflicted believer is taught to look to, and depend more upon God, for help in time of need, and leſs upon the creature. He now ſees that vain is the help of man in the day of calamity, and that God in Chriſt is the only proper object of the ſoul's truſt. This was the fruit of the Apoſtle's affliction, 2 Cor. i. 8. 9. 10. "We were preſſed out of meaſure, above ſtrength, inſomuch that we deſpaired even of life. We had the ſentence of death in ourſelves, that we ſhould not truſt in ourſelves, but in God that raiſeth the dead: who delivered us from ſo great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we truſt that he will yet deliver."

3. Humility, and low thoughts of ourſelves, is one of the fruits of righteouſneſs which ſanctified affliction doth yield. How proud and lofty was Nebuchadnezzar before his affliction, Dan. iv. 29. 30. But afterwards he is made to own God, and humbly ſubmit to him as his ſupreme and uncontroulable ſovereign, and to acknowledge, that thoſe who walk in pride, he is

able to abaſe, ver 27. This was God's deſign in tl various trials of his people Iſrael in the wilderneſs, Deu viii. 16. "That he might humble thee, prove thee, ar do thee good at thy latter end." See then, O believe if this fruit be produced in thee.

4. Another fruit is the ſpirit of prayer and ſuppl cation. This was viſible in the Pſalmiſt's caſe, afte God had delivered him from the ſorrows of death, an heard his voice, Pſal. cxvi. 2. "Therefore, ſays h will I call upon him as long as I live." O, ſaith a tru believer, God's mercy to me in trouble, and his ſenc ing me relief when I cried to him, will make me lov prayer the better, and engage me to be more diligen in it all my days; for I ſtill ſee I have daily need of h helping hand.

5. Heavenly-mindedneſs is a fruit of ſanctified a fliction. Before the man was inclined to that languag it is good for us to be here, let us build tabernacles i this lower world, but now he turns his tongue, an changeth his thoughts, and ſaith, with the Pſalmiſt, "I is good for me to draw nigh to God. Ariſe, let us de part, this is not our reſt. This world is nothing but th houſe of our pilgrimage, heaven only is our home."

6. Another fruit of ſanctified trials, is greater lov to God than formerly. How much was David's hea warmed with love and gratitude to God, upon the bac of his affliction, ſo that he wants words to expreſs th affections of his ſoul? Pſal. cxvi. 1. 8. 12. "I will lov the Lord. becauſe he hath heard my voice, I was brough low, but he helped me. Thou haſt delivered my ſou from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet fror falling. What ſhall I render to the Lord for all hi benefits towards me."

7. Learning and keeping of God's word, is a frui of ſanctified affliction, Pſal. cxix. 67. 71. Let us en quire if this fruit be produced in us after ſickneſs: D we attend to the word more cloſely? Do we believe i more firmly? Do we embrace its offers more earneſt ly? Do we rely on its promiſes more ſtedfaſtly? And do we live more in the expectation of that glory whicl the word doth reveal to us? Then it is good for us tha

we have been afflicted, for we have learned more of God's word.

8. Tenderneſs of conſcience is a happy fruit of ſanctified trouble, when the believer, after it, becomes exceedingly afraid of ſin, and of making new wounds in his conſcience. He cannot think of adventuring again upon any known ſin, for the ſmart of former wounds, and the pain they occaſioned in his ſoul, when diſtreſs lay upon him, makes deep and laſting impreſſion on his mind, as it did on the afflicted church, Lam. iii. 19. 20. "Remembering mine affliction, and my miſery, the wormwood and the gall, my ſoul hath them ſtill in remembrance, and is humbled within me." Now, ſuch fruits of righteouſneſs are an evidence we have been ſuitably exerciſed under affliction. O to find them produced in us after ſickneſs is over!

DIRECT. V. Be careful to perform thoſe Reſolutions, Engagements or Vows, you have come under in the time of Sickneſs; and walk ſuitably to them.

AS a time of ſickneſs and affliction is a proper ſeaſon for making vows to God, and binding our ſouls with reſolutions to mortify ſin in the heart, and purge it away from the life, and to be diligent in duty, and walk more humbly with God; ſo a time of recovery from ſickneſs, is a proper ſeaſon for paying and performing theſe vows. This was the royal Pſalmiſt's practice in ſuch a caſe, Pſal. cxvi. 6. 16. 17. 18. "I was brought low, and he helped me. Truly I am thy ſervant, I am thy ſervant. I will offer to thee the ſacrifice of thankſgiving. I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now in the preſence of all his people." Now, for your aſſiſtance in this matter, I offer you theſe few advices.

1. Defer not to pay your vows, but be ſpeedy, and take thy firſt opportunity to pay them. Delays in this caſe are moſt dangerous: Solomon, that wiſe man, was

ſenſible of this, which made him give this advice, Eccl. v. 4. "When thou voweſt a vow unto God, defer not to pay it."

2. Be ſtill jealous of thy heart, which is prone to deal treacherouſly with God after affliction is over: The Iſraelites practice is a ſad inſtance of this truth, Pſal. lxxviii. 34 &c. "When he ſlew them, then they ſought him, and they returned and enquired early after God, &c. Nevertheleſs they did flatter him with their mouths, and they lied to him with their tongues: for their heart was not right with him, neither were they ſtedfaſt in his covenant." The purpoſes of many in affliction, are like the vows of mariners in a ſtorm; they are the firſt things which they forget and break, when once they win ſafe aſhore. However penitent ſome ſeem to be in ſickneſs, yet, when they recover from it, they ſoon return to their old ſins again. They are like metals in a furnace; they melt and turn liquid, while in it, but when out, they ſoon return to their old hardneſs. There is good reaſon for that caution the Lord gives us, Mal. ii 16. "Therefore take heed to your ſpirit, that ye deal not treacherouſly."

3. Cry continually for ſtrength from above, to enable you to perform your vows. The Pſalmiſt took this courſe, and found it ſucceſsful, Pſal. cxxxviii. 3. "In the day when I cried to thee thou anſweredſt me, and ſtrengthenedſt me with ſtrength in my ſoul." And forget not, O believer, that God has treaſured up ſtrength for thee in thy Head and Surety, Chriſt Jeſus; wherefore be ſtill borrowing from him, for the performing of all thy engagements, 2 Tim. ii. 1. "My ſon, be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus." Put thy treacherous heart in thy Surety's hand, for though thou art weak, yet thy Redeemer is ſtrong. Whenever thou you firſt perceive your heart begin to ſtart aſide from God, be ſure to check it, and look up to God in Chriſt, for ſtrength to ſecure it againſt treachery and perfidious dealing: Cry with the Pſalmiſt, "Be ſurety for thy ſervant for good."

4. Guard diligently againſt thy predominant ſin, the ſin that hath moſt eaſily beſet thee, the ſin that was moſt

moſt bitter and uneaſy to thee in the day of diſtreſs. Keep a narrow eye upon it now; for if once that ſin be got vanquiſhed, the reſt will the more eaſily be put to flight.

5. Be frequently meditating on thy vows, and on the condition thou waſt in when they were taken on, and ſtudy to keep alive in thy heart the ſame apprehenſion of things after ſickneſs, which thou hadſt in the time of it. How vain and comfortleſs did the world and its vanities then appear to thee! How awful were the truths of God on thy ſpirit! How far preferable was the loving-kindneſs of God to thee, than life! How precious was Chriſt then in thy eyes! O that your judgment, thoughts and impreſſions of theſe things may continue ſtill the ſame!

6. Keep up the impreſſions of the precioufneſs of time, that you may diligently improve it; and ſhake off ſloth and idleneſs. Remember what a view you got in the time of ſickneſs of long laſting eternity, and what a trouble it was to you to look back, and ſee how much time you had loſt in ſin and vanity. When ſometimes we are brought to the brink of eternity, the near views we then get of its vaſtneſs and unchangeableneſs, are ſometimes ſo awful and amazing to us, that we are ready to think, though we had Methuſalem's years to live, it would be unreaſonable wilfully to miſpend one hour of them all. Well then, is ſickneſs over, our time ſo ſhort, and ſo little of it remaining behind? Will we be ſo fooliſh, as to be laviſh of it ſtill, and trifle it away as before?

7. Set a ſpecial mark upon all theſe ſins, whether of omiſſion or commiſſion, that made death look grim and ghaſtly upon you in the time of ſickneſs, and againſt which you reſolved; and ſee to get every one of them amended and removed. Remember and conſider how ſad it will be for you, if ſickneſs find you again in the very ſame ſins which formerly ſtung you. What will you ſay to conſcience, when it ſhall challenge you? How will you look death in the face, if it ſhould find you living in the very ſame ſins you formerly mourned for,

for, and promiſed againſt? death would then be the king of terrors to thy ſoul indeed.

O then mind thy vows, and ſay, with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lvi. 12. 13. "Thy vows are upon me, O God; I will render praiſes to thee. For thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death; wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the land of the living?"

CHAP. VI.

Containing Directions to the Unregenerate, when they are recovered from Sickneſs, and reſtored to Health.

DIRECT. I. Seeing the afflictions of the wicked are unſanctified, it is neceſſary you examine what ſort of affliction yours hath been, and what fruits it hath produced in you.

I HAVE, in the preceding chapter, ſhowed that the afflictions of believers are fatherly chaſtiſements, proceeding from love; that they are ſanctified, and yield the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs. I have given the marks of ſanctified afflictions, and mentioned the happy fruits which they produce in the children of God.

On the other hand, it is neceſſary to let Chriſtleſs perſons know, that their afflictions are of a different kind; they are even puniſhments from God as a judge, proceeding from wrath: they are unſanctified to them, and produce no fruits, but what are bitter and unſavoury.

Well then, O Chriſtleſs ſoul, thou haſt reaſon to ſuſpect the worſt concerning thy ſickneſs, that it hath not been ſanctified, and its fruits are not good. O then, labour to know the truth of the matter, that thou mayeſt be humble under a ſenſe of thy miſery, and flee

to

to Jeſus Chriſt for relief. And, for thy aſſiſtance in this enquiry, I ſhall give ſome marks of unſanctified afflictions.

1. If ſickneſs hath not humbled thee under a ſenſe of thy ſins, the procuring cauſe thereof, nor any wiſe hath weakened ſin in thee, nor reclaimed thee from it, but it remaineth in thee as ſtrong as ever; it is a ſign thy affliction is unſanctified. This was the caſe of thoſe of whom God complaineth, Jer. ii. 30. "In vain have I ſmitten your children; they received not correction." As if he had ſaid, the phyſic I gave them did not purge out ſin; nor weaken corruption in the leaſt. They have been ſtricken, but not grieved for ſin: the fire hath burnt round about them, but they have not laid ſin to heart, that kindled the flame.

2. It is a mark of unſanctified affliction, when it hath no influence upon a ſinner to bring him to a ſerious communing with his own heart concerning the ſtate of his ſoul, and to enquire in what terms he ſtands with God that afflicts him. God's voice by affliction is that in Haggai i. 7. "Now conſider your ways." In the day of adverſity conſider where you are, what you are, what you have done, what is the meaning of the rod, what will be the iſſue of it through eternity, in caſe it hath a commiſſion to cut the thread of life. Now when a man remains ſtupid and careleſs about theſe important matters, and never noticeth the voice of affliction, ſo as to enquire ſeriouſly about his ſoul's condition: "Am I under a covenant of works, or a covenant of grace? Am I a child of God, or an enemy of God? Have I fled to the city of refuge, or am I ſtill in a ſhelterleſs ſtate? Am I ſtill under a cloud of wrath, or am I brought under the banner of love?" I ſay, where there are no ſuch enquiries, the affliction is unſanctified.

3. It is a certain ſign of unſanctified affliction, when a perſon grows worſe by it, and revolts the more he is ſtricken, like theſe, Iſa. i. 5.

Queſt. "When may it be ſaid that a perſon grows worſe by affliction?"

Anſ.

Anſ. When the ſinner's heart turns harder than it was before; ſo every plague in Egypt increaſed the plague of hardneſs in Pharaoh's heart. It fares with many hearts as with iron that is often heated in the fire, and quenched in the water, it ſtill increaſeth in hardneſs. 2. When a perſon gets the way to impatience and murmuring againſt God while he afflicts him. 3. When the luſts of the heart grow more ſtrong and impetuous, and afterwards rage the more, that they have been ſtopt in their courſe by affliction. In ſuch caſes a perſon grows worſe by the rod.

DIRECT. II. Conſider the great danger of not being bettered by ſickneſs, and of not complying with the voice of God's rod.

GOD's voice by his rod doth loudly call ſinners to repentance, and fleeing to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for refuge from wrath. Now, when this voice is not hearkened to, but men go on in their ſecure and ſinful courſe as before, God is highly provoked, and the iſſue will be terrible: For,

1. Though ſickneſs be removed, and the furnace of affliction be cooled for the time; yet the wrath that kindled it continues ſtill to burn. And you have ground to fear leſt you be ranked among thoſe who are the generation of God's wrath, againſt whom he will have indignation for ever.

2. If leſſer rods do not awaken you, you may expect greater and ſorer judgments are coming on you. Yea, God may cauſe them to come rolling thick upon you, as waves and billows in a ſtorm, one upon the neck of another. The great depths, both above and below, may be opened together; the diſpleaſure of God, and wrath of men, may conſpire and meet to pour out themſelves as water ſpouts upon you at once; and, to whom then will ye look for help?

3. The Lord may give over dealing with you, or uſing any further means to reclaim you; he may refuſe to correct you any more, or beſtow a rod upon you for your good, and ſay of you, as of Ephraim, Hoſ-

ſeſ. iv. 17. "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him
one."

4. The Lord may give you up to ſpiritual plagues
nd judgments; and indeed this commonly is the reſult
f obſtinacy and incorrigibleneſs under outward rods.
hen Iſrael would not hearken to God's voice, he gave
em up to their own heart's luſts, Pſal. lxxxi. 11. 12.
ow, theſe plagues are the ſevereſt of all others. Ex-
rnal judgments are God's rods, but ſpiritual judgments
re his ſwords, which pierce the very ſoul. Blindneſs
f mind, hardneſs of heart, ſearedneſs of conſcience,
ile affections, and a reprobate ſenſe, are the very fore-
nners of hell and damnation. Thoſe who are im-
atient and unfruitful under outward afflictions, have
uſe to tremble, leſt God be provoked to inflict thoſe
iritual judgments.

5. Be aſſured, though God ſpare you long, yet the
aſs of his forbearance will at length run out. God's
atience towards ſinners hath a term and bound, over
hich it will not paſs. The time will come when a
ng ſuffering God will at laſt ſay, My Spirit ſhall no
nger ſtrive; and the angel will cry, as Rev. xiv. 7.
The hour of God's judgment is come." You that
uſe God's patience, and preſume upon it, his treaty
peace will end with you in a little, and the maſter
the houſe will riſe up and ſhut to the door. Then
tience will come down, and juſtice will aſcend the
ge, and trample upon, and triumph over all that abuſe
ine patience. Sodom was a wonder of God's pa-
nce for a long time, but now it is a laſting monu-
ent of his anger.

6. If you be not bettered by God's rods or ſparing
rcies, then your preſervation at preſent will be no-
ng but a reſervation for the day of God's wrath. And
e longer your cup of ſin is a filling, the fuller ſhall the
p of God's wrath be for you: by your impenitence
d abuſe of God's patience, you treaſure up wrath for
urſelves againſt the day of wrath, Rom. ii. 4. And
ough you be delivered from ſome judgments, you are
ſerved for worſe; yea, for ſeven times worſe, accord-
g to Lev. xxvi. 23. 24. Nay, there is a ruining blow

deſigned againſt you, both ſoul and body, as ſoon as your cup is full; and the ax is already laid to the root of the tree, Mat. iii. 10. One blow of God's ax will cut off for ever.

Remember this, O ſinner, though God's hand be lifted off you at preſent, and his meſſenger, Death, be for a little recalled, yet he will quickly return, and knock ſo loud at your door, as not to be refuſed. And, what will you do in the day of viſitation? how ghaſtly muſt the pale horſe be, when hell follows him at his heels? and, how hot and fiery muſt that hell be, which is inflamed and blown up by ſo long impenitence and abuſe of patience?

DIRECT. III. Wonder at the patience of God in ſparing ſuch hell deſerving ſinners as you are, and be thankful for it.

HATH a long ſuffering God preſerved the thread of your life, when it was almoſt ſnapt aſunder by the violence of ſickneſs? hath he freed you from racking pains under which you are groaning? nay, ſaved you from the grave and hell, into which you were falling? and have you not cauſe of wondering and thankſgiving? To move you to it, conſider theſe few things:

1. How miſerable had you been through all eternity, if your ſickneſs had carried you off to another world in your ſins? You had been howling with damned ſpirits, under endleſs and ceaſeleſs torments, and for ever cut off from theſe hopes and offers of mercy you now have. Then the maſter of the houſe would have had the door ſo barred againſt you, as it could never have been opened again to you, knock as you would, Luke xiii. 25.

2. Conſider how heavily you had burdened his patience with your heinous ſins, and frequent relapſe thereinto: and that after convictions, calls, and various rods ſent to reclaim you; ſo that he was put to ſay, as in Amos ii. 14. "Behold, I am preſſed under you, as a cart is preſſed that is full of ſheaves." He was overburdened

burdened with your ſins, ſo that the axle-tree of patience was ready to break, and let you fall into hell; and yet, behold he bears with you ſtill.

3. Conſider how ſoon he could have eaſed himſelf of the load, and ſhaken you off into the pit of deſtruction. In a moment could he have done it, and yet he bears many years with your ſins, that are ſo grievous to him. Yea, it is with a ſort of reluctance that he eaſes himſelf of ſinners after he gets the utmoſt provocation, Iſaiah i. 24. "Ah, I will eaſe me of my adverſaries."

4. How ready is he to turn away his anger, and reprieve ſinners from deſtruction, when in their diſtreſs they make but a ſhew of repentance and turning unto God! as we ſee in Pſal. lxxviii. 36. 38. He, like a tender-hearted prince, calls back the warrant for their execution after it was gone forth.

5. Conſider how much many Chriſtleſs ſinners are beholden to Jeſus Chriſt for ſparing mercy. He is repreſented by the dreſſer, Luke xiii. interceding that the fruitleſs fig tree might be ſpared and tried ſome time longer, after orders given to cut it down. Were it not for Jeſus Chriſt, O ſinner, however much you forget and ſlight him, you had ſurely been in hell long ere now. How often doth he obtain another year, and after that another, for the unfruitful ſinner, and unthankful abuſers of Divine patience!

6. Conſider how ſparing mercy hath diſtinguiſhed you from many others, who lived not ſo long, nor ſinned ſo much as you have done. God hath wounded the hairy ſcalp of many, and taken them away in their youth; when he hath continued you to manhood, and perhaps to old age; though your ſins and ill-deſervings be greater than thoſe of many, on whom he hath long ſince taken vengeance, God hath left many alſo toſſing and groaning on beds of pain, when he hath eaſed and helped you up. O then return, like the thankful leper, and magnify the God of your health. Hath God diſtinguiſhed you from others by his goodneſs? it becomes you to diſtinguiſh yourſelves from others by your thankfulneſs. O that men would praiſe

the Lord for his goodneſs! undeſerved and diſtinguiſhing goodneſs!

To move you to this, let me ſet the example of Hezekiah before you, Iſa. xxxviii. and there ſee how thankfully and affectionately he remembered the Lord's mercies in recovering and delivering him from the bitter affliction he had been under. "I ſaid, I am deprived of the reſidue of my years, I ſhall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. Like a crane or ſwallow, ſo did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove. Behold, for peace I had great bitterneſs; but thou haſt in love to my ſoul delivered it from the pit of corruption. The living ſhall praiſe thee as I do this day." Yea, he was ſo overcome with a ſenſe of the Lord's patience and mercy towards him, that he is at a loſs how to expreſs it, ver. 15. "What ſhall I ſay? he hath both ſpoken unto me, and himſelf hath done it."

Let all, who are recovered from ſickneſs, ſtudy to imitate that good king in holy admiration and thankfulneſs to the God of their life.

DIRECT. IV. Study to improve the ſparing mercy and goodneſs of God to you in a right and ſuitable manner.

O ſinner, hath God brought you back from the gate of death, and brink of hell, reſtored you to health, and given you a new offer of mercy and ſalvation through Chriſt in a preached goſpel, which you formerly deſpiſed? Strive now to improve the Lord's patient and kind dealings towards you with the utmoſt care, and abuſe his patience no longer. And, in order thereunto, take the following counſels.

I. Be deeply humbled for your former obſtinacy and impenitency, notwithſtanding of God's gracious and patient dealing. O let the ſparing mercy and goodneſs of God toward thee, lead thee to repentance, which is the native deſign of it, according to Rom. ii. 4. "Deſpiſeſt

piſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, forbearance and long ſuffering, not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance? As if he had ſaid, "Doſt thou not ſee, O man, the kind providence of God in ſparing and recovering thee from ſickneſs, taking thee by the hand, and pointing out to thee to go to thy cloſet, and to mourn and weep for all thy bypaſt ſins, and particularly for thy miſpending the time of thy health, and abuſing of the Lord's patience?" The conſideration of David's goodneſs and forbearance towards Saul, melted Saul's heart, for as hard and rugged as it was, and made him to lift up his voice and weep, and ſay to David, 1 Sam, xxiv. 17. &c. "Thou art more righteous than I; for thou haſt rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil." "And thou haſt ſhewed this day, how that thou haſt dealt well with me; forafmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedſt me not. For (ſays he) if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?" Oh, far more reaſon haſt thou, O man, to weep and cry, "God hath found me his enemy, yea, in my enmity and ſins, fighting againſt himſelf, he had me on a ſick bed, and on the very brink of hell, and the leaſt touch of his hand would have thruſt me in: But yet he hath ſpared his enemy, and let me go well away. Oh, will not theſe cords of love draw me, and this matchleſs goodneſs invite and hire me to repent? Can any conſideration in the world be more powerful than this to melt my hard heart into tears of holy ſhame and ſorrow for my ſtiffneckedneſs and rebellion againſt a gracious and long-ſuffering God? Away with theſe curſed God provoking ſins of mine? Down with theſe weapons of rebellion! Let me never lift them more againſt ſuch a merciful Sovereign!

II. Zealouſly improve the time, which God in his long ſuffering hath lengthened out to you, in working out the ſalvation of thy ſoul. Have you ſo long been loading the patience of God with your ſins? Have you many a day been grieving his Holy Spirit, by trifling away your time, ſlighting his motions, and venturing on ſins againſt light? O then, beware of burdening his

patience

patience any more; but diligently hearken to every motion of God's Spirit, and of your own conſcience, for the time to come. You have much work to do, and but little time to do it in; therefore lay hold on every opportunity for carrying it on. The conſideration of the much time you have already loſt and miſpent, ſhould make you the more diligent in what remaineth. How much of it have you loſt in youth? How much in ignorance? How much in negligence? How much in worldlineſs? How much in paſtimes? How much in idle words? How much in actual ſins and provocations againſt God? And now it may be near the evening of your day. And will you not ſpend the evening (which God is mercifully lengthening out) with extraordinary care and diligence? If a traveller loſe the beginning of the day, he muſt travel the faſter, in the evening, otherwiſe he may fall ſhort of his journey, and have his lodging to ſeek when night comes. Paul had miſpent much of the beginning of his life; and this conſideration (when his eyes were opened) did ſtir him up to be the more diligent in the ſervice of God, ſo that he was more zealous than any of the reſt of the Apoſtles. O man, follow his example, and trifle no longer in the work of God. Art thou not convinced thou haſt ſquandered away enough of this precious treaſure of time already? And, wilt thou alſo miſpend and throw away the little that remains? Oh be not ſo fooliſh.

III. Be careful to raze all falſe foundations, and build your hopes of ſalvation upon the only ſure rock, Jeſus Chriſt. Let it not diſcourage thee to dig to the foundation, that ſo much of thy day is loſt; for it is better to do it late than never. Remember how miſerable is the condition of that houſe which is built upon the ſand, Matt. vii. 27. "For when the flood comes, and the ſtorm ariſes and beats upon it, great and diſmal will the fall of that houſe be." Do not build your hopes of heaven upon God's abſolute mercy, upon your convictions, upon your freedom from groſs ſins, upon your prayers or tears, upon your morality and juſt dealings with men: Though theſe be neceſſary and excellent in themſelves, yet they are falſe foundations for you to build

build the hopes of your juſtification and ſalvation upon, ſeeing they are wholly inſufficient to bear ſuch a weight. However much theſe things have been eſteemed and valued by you formerly, in the matter of juſtification; yet if you reſolve to be a wiſe builder, you will let them all now go, yea, count them all but loſs and dung that you may win Chriſt, (our only hope) build on him alone, and be found in him, not having on your own righteouſneſs, which is but filthy rags.

Well, then, raze and tear up every falſe foundation, dig deep, till you get to the rock Chriſt. Dig deep into the holy law and nature of God; dig till you ſee the infinite ſtrictneſs of Divine juſtice, the unſpeakable evil that is in ſin, the hidden vileneſs and abominations of the heart, your own inability to do any thing for your help and relief. Dig yet further, till you ſee the infinite fulneſs and freeneſs of God's grace in Jeſus Chriſt, that ſuitable remedy that anſwers all a poor ſinner's needs. Dig deep, and dig ſtill on, till you get to this rock; let your cry be ſtill to God, Lord lead me to the rock Chriſt, and his all ſufficient righteouſneſs, only. Act faith upon this rock, rely on it, build all your hopes on it, and ſay, "this is my reſt for ever; here will I dwell, for I have deſired it. Lord, the deſire of my ſoul is only to Chriſt, and to the remembrance of his name. His name is a ſweet ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love him."

IV. If you would rightly improve the ſparing mercy and goodneſs of God, let it lead you to repentance and reformation of life. Turn from all theſe ſins, whether of omiſſion or commiſſion, now in the day of health, which conſcience challenged you for in the time of ſickneſs. Mind Chriſt's caution and warning to healed ſinners, John v. 14. "Behold thou art made whole; ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing befal thee." O let ſin die with thy ſickneſs; and do not relapſe into thy former ſecurity and ſinful ways. Beware of returning with the dog to thy vomit, and like the ſow that is waſhed to the wallowing again in the mire of thy former ſins and uncleanneſs; leſt being entangled and overcome

overcome again with the filthineſs which thou no haſt eſcaped, thy latter end prove worſe than thy be ginning.

Laſtly, And to ſum up all I ſhall ſay in this chapte be careful to redeem time, and active in providing fo an eternal ſtate. O prize and value the mercy o health and ſtrength, more than ever. Sympathiſe wit thoſe who are ſtill lying on ſick-beds, and under lan guiſhing diſtempers; neglect not to pity and pray fo them. Remember the diſtreſſed caſe you were in your ſelves, when you had no reſt in your bones, whe wearifome nights were appointed to you, and you wer full of toſſings to the dawning of the day. Conſide how ſlippery is your ſtanding. Though the late ſtorm of trouble be over, yet the clouds will return afte rain.

CHAP. VII.

Containing directions to thoſe ſick perſons, who are apparently in a dying condition, and drawing near to another world.

I HAVE already, in the firſt, third, and fourth chapters, given ſeveral directions concerning our ſubmiſſion to the will of God, making preparation for death, calling for miniſters, edifying others by our diſcourſe, ſettling our worldly affairs, &c. which are very proper for dying perſons; and therefore I ſhall not repeat them, but proceed to ſpeak of other things. Only let me add this word; have you hitherto neglected to make your wills, ſettle your worldly affairs, ſend for the miniſters to diſcourſe with, and pray for you; delay it no longer, but do it ſpeedily, while you have the uſe of your reaſon and underſtanding. And what I have more to ſay, take it in the following directions.

DIRECT.

DIRECT. I. Consider, when Death stares you in the face, that now is the time, if ever, to exert the utmost activity in preparing to meet with it.

ALAS, it is to be regretted that the most part of men neglect their souls, mispend their life, misimprove their health, and leave undone the work for which they were created, preserved, and enjoyed the gospel. Surely a near prospect of death and judgment cannot but be uneasy to such persons. What a melancholy thought must it be for a dying man? "Oh! I had all my time given me to make preparation for endless eternity; and, alas, I never minded it till now, that I must leave the stage of this world. Is there any hope for such a careless and miserable sinner." I acknowledge the case is sad, but yet it is not remediless nor desperate; seeing there is a sacrifice provided for your sins, and there is an all-sufficient Saviour in your offer, who never did cast out any humbled soul that came to him for mercy. You have great reason indeed to abhor and condemn yourself before God, for your sin and folly; yet despair not, but believe, whatever be your sins, your dangers, your fears, and temptations, that Jesus Christ is both able and willing to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, and that his grace aboundeth more than your sin aboundeth. O how glad would devils and damned souls in hell be, if they were but in your case, and had your offers and hopes! how diligently would they improve the time of mercy! O be persuaded then to spend the little time that now remains, with the utmost care, in making penitent confession of sin to God, and applying the blood of Christ for pardon. Nay, even the best of God's people have need to be diligent at this time in making actual preparations for dying. God is now saying to you, as Joshua did to the Israelites, Josh. i. 11. "Prepare you victuals, for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God giveth you." Lay in provisions for your passing over this Jordan of death: you know not how rough this passage may be.

I ſhall give ſome motives to preſs this diligent an active preparation; and therefore conſider,

1. The ſhort time of your life that remains is all th time you have for working out your ſalvation. Wha you do for attaining heaven, or avoiding hell, muſt b done now, or never; for there is no work nor devic in the grave whither thou goeſt, nor is there any com ing back to this world to amend what hath been don amiſs. Dying is a thing you cannot get a trial of, it i what you can only do once, and no more, Heb. ix. 27

2. Be diligent now; for as ſoon as death gets com miſſion to cut you off, it will execute it: it will not ſpar you, nor allow you one minute more time to prepar for eternity. The moſt mercileſs enemies have ſome times been overcome by the prayers and tears of ſuc as, on their knees, do beg a little more time to prepar for another world; and do hearken to their requeſts but this enemy, death, will not grant one moment's re ſpite.

3. Conſider that your eternal ſtate and condition wi be according to the ſtate in which you die. Death wi open the doors either of heaven or hell to you, in on of which you ſhall take up your eternal abode. As th tree falls at death, ſo will it lie through eternity.

4. Conſider what a ſerious and awful matter it is t die, and go into another world, for then you will ha immediately to do with God your judge; there will b no veil then between him and your ſoul. You w then enter into a world of ſpirits, wherewith you are little acquainted: you are frighted now to go into room alone, that is ſaid to be haunted by a ſpirit; ho frightful then muſt the caſe of thoſe be, who are hu ried into a world of ſpirits, not knowing but devils mu be their companions for ever! Surely then it is yo intereſt to give all diligence now, to make your a quaintance with the Lord of that world, before you e ter into it.

3. Put forth thy utmoſt activity for thy ſoul no for, to be ſure, Satan will put forth his utmoſt agai it. If thou be in a Chriſtleſs ſtate at this time, he w uſe all his efforts and ſtratagems to keep thee fro Chri

Chriſt; either by flattering thee that thy ſtate is good, thereby to lull you aſleep in ſin and ſecurity, or by telling thee, it is out of time to help matters with thee, thereby to drive you into deſpair. The devil will leave no method unattempted to ruin thy ſoul, when death is near; for he knows his time is ſhort; and, if he catch not the ſoul then, he will never get it: and neither can he hurt it hereafter; for, if once it enter heaven, he can trouble it no more.

If thou art a believer in Chriſt, Satan, thy malicious enemy, will not fail to attack thee, at this time, with all his might; for though he may know he cannot keep thee out of heaven, yet he will labour to render thy paſſage towards it as dark, tempeſtuous, and uncomfortable, as poſſibly he can. But it is the believer's happineſs, this cruel enemy is under a ſtrong chain, and cannot do all he would; for Jeſus Chriſt is the good ſhepherd, that hath undertaken for all his ſheep. Nevertheleſs, by his wiſe permiſſion, this adverſary may ſometimes give great diſturbance to a dying ſaint; which calls thee to the greateſt diligence and watchfulneſs at this time. It is the obſervation of one, that as the devil is moſt buſy at the concluſion of a duty, as of prayer, that the Chriſtian may be moſt diſturbed and diſtracted, when he is to cloſe up all in the name of Chriſt, and ſo all his deſires be fruſtrated; ſo he is moſt buſy in the coclnuſion of our days, and when death is at hand, ſeeking by temptations, diſtractions, and falſe imaginations, to do us all the miſchief he can, and all becauſe he knoweth his time is ſhort; according to that word, Rev. xii. 12. "The devil is come down, having great wrath, becauſe that he knoweth he hath but a ſhort time." He may fitly be called, the wolf of the evening, mentioned in Jer. v. 6. in regard he comes forth moſt fiercely in the evening of men's lives, to ſet upon their precious ſouls. Yea, ſo buſy is he ſome times with believers under dangerous ſickneſs, ſeeking to overthrow their faith and aſſurance, that it is the obſervation of a good man, that he ſeldom ſeeth a ſick ſaint, followed cloſe with temptations, recover of that ſickneſs; for Satan, knowing he hath but a little time, proves as uneaſy to him as he

can. Hence that great man of God, Mr Knox, said, when he came to die: "In my lifetime, the devil tempted me to despair, casting my sins in my teeth; but now, in my sickness, he tells me, I have been faithful in the ministry, and so have merited heaven: But blessed be God, who brought these texts into my mind; "Not I, but the grace of God in me. What hast thou that thou hast not received?" The children of Israel had never such hot work from their enemies, as when they just came to enter into the promised land.

What need then hast thou, O believer, to be diligent in thy preparations on a dying-bed to quicken grace, put forth thy utmost strength, bring all the assistance thou canst from the Captain of thy salvation, when thou hast such a cruel enemy to encounter with! Now is the time for action, though yet it will be your wisdom to leave as little to be done at this time as possible.

DIRECT. II. Continue to the last in the exercise of true Repentance and Humiliation for Sin.

POSSIDONIUS, who wrote the life of Augustine, said that he often heard him say in his health, that repentance was the fittest disposition both for dying Christians and ministers; and for himself, that he died with tears in his eyes, weeping for sin. When death approacheth nearest, we should thus stir up ourselves to give sin the most deadly blow of any we have given it all our life. As it is laudable to die forgiving sinners that have wronged us, so also taking revenge upon sin that hath injured a gracious God. The apostle tells us, 2 Cor vii 11. that indignation and revenge attend true repentance. Wherefore, as Samuel took vengeance on Agag a little before his death, and Moses (at God's command) avenged the children of Israel of the Midianites, just before he was gathered to his people, Numb. xxxi. 2. and dying Samson gave the most fatal blow to the Philistines, of any he had given them before; so a dying Christian should take the severest revenge on sin at last, which hath so often through his life dishonoured God,

God, pierced Chriſt, and grieved his holy Spirit. It is the laſt opportunity you will have to ſhow your indignation at it, and therefore do it effectually.

Again, conſider, it is old ſins unmourned for, that many times keep believers ſo much in the dark, when they come to die. Theſe do raiſe many thick clouds about their evening ſun, and hinder them from going off the ſtage with ſuch comfortable aſſurance of God's love, as otherwiſe they might attain to. Theſe did very much hinder Job's peace and ſettlement in the day of affliction, as he complains, Job xiii. 26. "He makes me to poſſeſs the iniquities of my youth." It is a ſad thing when young ſins and old bones meet together. O that young people would mind this in time! You are doing that now, which will abide with you to age, if not to eternity. Sin muſt be bitter ſome time or other, for God calls it a root that bears gall and wormwood, Deut. xxix. 18. Iſrael could not have peace nor ſucceſs while there was an Achan in the camp; ſo neither can you have conſolation or aſſurance, while any ſin lies unreckoned for in the conſcience. Make a thorough ſearch then into old ſins, and mourn over them. We find Paul frequently calling over the ſins of his life, and even thoſe he was guilty of before converſion: "I was injurious, a blaſphemer," &c. whereby he obtained much inward peace and conſolation. Be often looking back to old ſins, with inward ſorrow and faith in Chriſt's blood, if you would have a death-bed eaſy and ſoft to you.

DIRECT. III. Be mindful of all acts of Juſtice and Charity which may be incumbent upon you at this time.

IT is great wiſdom in men to ſettle their worldly affairs in time of health, that ſo their minds may be free for ſpiritual exerciſes, and not diſturbed with earthly cares and buſineſs when they come to a dying bed; but, if this hath been neglected hitherto, it muſt not be omitted now. I have given directions about it, Chap. I.

Direct.

Direct. VI. ſo that I ſhall ſay little here, only be careful to do juſtice to every man, as much as in you lieth; and particularly, 1. By making a juſt and rational proviſion for your wife and children. 2. By ordering the payment of all your juſt debts, without defrauding any of your lawful creditors. 3. By making reſtitution, in caſe you have wronged any man. If juſtice be not done in theſe matters, how can your ſouls be diſburdened of guilt?

In the next place, forget not the acts of charity, which God requires of all the profeſſors of the goſpel.

1. Seek reconciliation with your neighbours, where any difference or miſtakes have fallen in; that ſo you may die in peace and charity with all about you.

2. Be ready from the heart to forgive thoſe that have done you any wrong. If the natural ſun ſhould not go down upon our wrath, much leſs ſhould the ſun of our lives; if you carry an unforgiving ſpirit with you into another world, how can you expect to meet with a forgiving God there? When he hath expreſsly declared, clared, Matt. vi. 15. "If you forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive you your treſpaſſes." O then, imitate your glorious Saviour, and his martyr Stephen, who at their death begged mercy from God, for thoſe that mortally hated them, Luke xxiii. 34. Acts vii. 60.

3. If the Lord hath given you ſubſtance, honour the Lord with it, by leaving ſome part of it to the poor, and to pious uſes. I have preſſed this once and again before; but I mention it frequently, becauſe it is much forgotten by dying perſons in our age. Remember, it is not left arbitrary to you to give or not, as you pleaſe: No, for God doth charge it upon you as a duty: yea, a debt that you owe to him, 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18. "Charge them that are rich in this world, &c. that they do good, be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute," And he pronounceth them bleſſed who conſider the poor, Pſal. xli. 1. I grant that people are not to leave all their works of charity to a death-bed; theſe ſhould alſo be minded in our lifetime, ſo as to make our own hands

inds our executors, and our own eyes our overseers of ir charitable projects: but surely it is a proper season r shewing charity to God's poor, when we are leaving em, and cannot have occasion for showing it more. emember what is recorded of Dorcas after her death, cts ix. 36. that she was a woman full of good works ld alms-deeds. And her friends, ver. 39. shewed the fects of her charity to Peter after her death. All which written for our example and admonition, that we may : rich in such good works, that our friends may have em to show after our death. Surely it is a sign of e degeneracy of the age, and that religion is on the clining hand, when people generally fall so short of e zeal and piety of their fathers in these matters.

4. It would be a commendable work of charity in ing persons, to be giving many good counsels to their ations and children, and to be putting up many fer- nt prayers to God for them. So Christ, when near death, committed his spiritual children to his Father, d earnestly begged his protection and care of them, hn xvii. 11. "I am no more in the world, but these : in the world: keep them through thy name, keep m from the evil," &c. In like manner, cry to God your children, "Lord, thou hast graciously given m to me, I now restore them back to thee. They re born to me once, O that they may be born to thee :cond time! I am leaving them in the midst of snares l temptations, O that it may be their happiness to be preserved in Jesus Christ! keep them by thy power, ough faith unto salvation. O take them within the d of thy covenant, and be thou their Father to pro- , direct, and provide for them. Give them a name hy house better than of sons and daughters, that I y meet with them at thy right hand with everlasting "

Lastly, Be suitably concerned also for the whole rch of Christ, and especially for these that are in af- tion, that God may loose their bonds, send them li- ty and prosperity in his due time. "Do good in good pleasure unto Zion, build up the walls of thy usalem. Peace be within her walls, and prosperity hin her palaces."

DIRECT.

DIRECT. IV. Labour what you can to overcome th Love of Life, and Fears of Death: that you ma attain to willingneſs to die, and to leave the worl when God calleth you to it.

IT is no wonder that a wicked man, or one that ha no intereſt in Chriſt, be unwilling to die: Why? H is affrighted with the guilt of paſt ſins, and the fears o of future torments; and it is impoſſible to be rid o theſe till he become a true believer in Chriſt. No ma hath ground to welcome death but a true believer; ye it is to be regretted, that ſo many of them ſhould appea unwilling to leave this world, which is nothing to them but a wilderneſs and weary land. Lot's ſoul was vexe and troubled in Sodom, and yet he was loth to leave it; ſo ſome believers, when called to leave a vexing world do ſhow much hankering towards it, and would linger behind. This proceeds partly from nature, which dreads diſſolution, and partly from the weakneſs o grace. But, O let all God's children labour to overcome this averſion, and go forth to meet death half-way and bid it welcome. And, for their help in this matter, I ſhall lay before them the following arguments.

1. Conſider how little reaſon a believer hath to b much in love with this preſent life. 1. It is a ſinfu life; ſin dwells in your nature, breaks out in your life and pollutes all your duties. How often have you groan ed under this burden; and ſhould you not be glad to b eternally delivered from it? 2. It is a life of diſeaſe and infirmities; and ſhould you not be willing to b cured of them all at once? 3. It is a life of temptation: Satan is ſtill harraſſing thee; and ſhould you n be deſirous to be out of his reach? 4. It is a life o perſecutions from the wicked: they hate, reproach, an injure you many ways; and is it not deſirable to b "where the wicked ceaſe from troubling, and where th weary be at reſt?" 5. It is a life of clouds and darkneſs your ſun is often veiled, and your evidences obſcure which occaſions many bitter complaints; and ſhoul you not deſire that time, when the day ſhall break, an

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all ſhadows fly away? 6. It is a life of calamities and fears: it is like a ſtormy ſea, where one wave rolls upon the back of another; and when one calamity is paſt, we many time fear a greater is coming; and ſometimes the heavens turn ſo black and gloomy, that we fear a hurricane of judgment is ready to blow. And, ſhould you not bleſs God, when he comes by death to houſe your ſouls, and ſet you out of harm's way? It is in mercy that God takes away the righteous from the evil to come, Iſa. lvii. 1. So dealt he with Joſiah, 2 Kings xxii. 20. "I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou ſhalt be put into thy grave in peace, and thine eyes ſhall not ſee all the evil which I ſhall bring upon this place." So it is obſervable, that Methuſalah died the very year before the flood; Auguſtine a little before the ſacking of Hippo; Pareus juſt before the taking of Heidelberg. Luther obſerves, that all the Apoſtles died before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. And Luther himſelf died before the bloody wars broke out in Germany. Thus God frequently hides his people from the temptations and troubles that are coming on the earth. Why? He ſees many of them not in caſe to endure them; and therefore, he in mercy takes them away from a tempting and ſinning world, to a land of holineſs and reſt. While we are here, we live in a world that lies in wickedneſs; every ſenſe of the body betrays the ſoul into ſin; the poor ſoul can ſcarce look out at the eye, and not be infected, nor hear by the ear, and not be diſtracted, nor ſmell at the noſtrils, and not be tainted, nor taſte by the tongue, and not be allured, nor touch by the hand, and not be defiled.

O believer, what is this life that thou art ſo fond of? It is but a living death, or a dying life. It is full of grief for things paſt, full of labour for things preſent, and full of fears for things future. The firſt part of our life is ſpent in folly, the middle part is overwhelmed with cares, and the latter part of it is burdened with infirmities and age. And, what gain we by the prolonging of this life? Nothing but to do more evil,

ſee more evil, and ſuffer more evil. And ſhc
Chriſtian be unwilling to be rid of thoſe grievs

2*dly*, Conſider that dying is appointed as the
and the only way, to glory: there is no way to
the promiſed land, but by croſſing the Jordan of
And ſhould not a ſtranger deſire to be at hom
his friends, though he hath a rough way and ſtorn
to paſs? Is there any home like heaven, where yo
comparable friend Chriſt is? O what a happineſ
to be with Chriſt, and to ſee him as he is! How
do you think Peter, James and John were, in
taken up to mount Tabor, to be eye-witneſſes of
Saviour's transfiguration. But, O believer, death
cures a greater happineſs to you; it uſhers you to n
Zion, where you ſhall not only ſee your Saviour v
than the ſnow, and brighter than the ſun, but yo
transfigured with him, made like him, and eternal
cured of his preſence. The three Apoſtles ſaw bu
Prophets; but you ſhall ſee all the Prophets, all th
poſtles, all the Patriarchs, all the Martyrs, all the
perſons you once converſed with on earth, and i
neral all the ſaints in heaven, each of them ſhini
the ſun; and how ſweet will their company be
how ſoon will the trifles of the world vaniſh, and
pleaſures be forgot, when once the believer gets a
of that captivating glory above! When the ſhep
heard but ſome few notes of the angels ſongs,
praiſed God at the nativity of our Saviour, they
ſently left their flocks, and ran to Bethlehem to b
the child Jeſus lying in the manger; but much
cauſe hath a believer to leave all the pleaſures o
world, and run to behold an exalted Jeſus ſitting o
throne of his glory, with all his ſaints and angels
ing praiſes around him.

If Cato and Cleombrotus, two Heathens, after
ing Plato's book of the immortality of the ſoul,
voluntarily, the one fall on his ſword, the other
his neck from a precipice, that they might the ſo
come (as they fancied) to partake of thoſe joys;
a ſhame is it for Chriſtians, who have a far ſurer
clearer diſcovery of theſe things from God's own b

o be found unwilling to enter into theſe heavenly joys, vhen their bleſſed Redeemer calls for them thither.

3. Conſider how willing Chriſt was to come from ieaven to earth for you; and, ſhould you be unwilling to remove from earth to heaven for him? Yea, for yourſelves, for the gain is yours. O did Chriſt aſſume your nature, become obedient to death, and purchaſe an inheritance for you with his blood; and, will you be backward to go and take poſſeſſion of it? O for a Chriſt-like obedience at death!

Laſtly, Conſider what a reproach is caſt on Chriſtianity by a believer's unwillingneſs to die. For Chriſtians to pray, and ſpeak much of Chriſt, of heaven and Glory, and yet be unwilling to enter into that glory; what is it but a miſbelieving of God and a tempting of ſtrangers, to think there is no reality in religion?

Queſt. "Since death is not eaſy to grapple with, how ſhall I attain to this bleſſed diſpoſition, and a willingneſs to die?"

Anſ. 1. Be frequently putting forth the acts of faith upon the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and believe that Chriſt died to bring in a perfect righteouſneſs for believers, that they all may be complete in him. Now, why ſhould a believer be afraid to appear before God in Chriſt's righteouſneſs, which is ſo pleaſing and acceptable to him? Rev. xiv. 4. 5. They are ſaid to be without fault before the throne of God. If a believer were to appear before God in his own righteouſneſs, clothed with his own duties and performances, it would be dreadful to think of dying; but to have the white garment of an elder brother to put on, gives another view of death. Alas, it is our neglecting the daily exerciſe of faith, in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, that makes the thoughts of death ſo unwelcome.

2. When you attain to peace and reconciliation with God, labour to preſerve it. Be ſtating and clearing counts with God every day, and watch againſt theſe ſins that wound conſcience, waſte comfort, and grieve the Spirit of adoption. When we think God is diſpleaſed with us, we will be afraid of going to him.

3. Study to be more denied to the enjoyments of

this life, and to uſe them with a holy indifferenee; otherwiſe there will be an unwillingneſs to leave theſe things.

4. Labour to be deeply ſenſible of the burden of indwelling ſin and corruption, and the workings thereof in your hearts; and this will make the thoughts of death welcome, becauſe it eternally delivers you from it.

5. Seek further diſcoveries of the lovelineſs of Chriſt, and the daily exerciſe and increaſe of your ſoul's love to him: for it is the nature of love to long after communion with the perſon that we love.

6. Make death familiar to you, by the frequent forethoughts of it. Retire often from the world to think of dying, when you are in beſt health.

7. Be much taken up in the ſweet employments of praiſing God, and exalting the worthy Lamb that was ſlain; and this will incline you to be there, where this is the continued work.

Laſtly, Be often thinking of theſe warnings and forerunners of death, which God ſends to wean your heart from the love of life, and diſpoſe you to a willingneſs to die. For this end, God ſends manifold diſeaſes, pains, infirmities, wants, ſtraits, loſſes, croſſes, diſappointments, &c. And, in a ſpecial manner, let old people view the forerunners and harbingers of death, which God ſends to prepare his way: ſuch as the decays and infirmities of old age, which we have elegantly deſcribed in figurative expreſſions, Eccleſ. xii. ii. "Then the light of the ſun, moon and ſtars ſhall be darkened; i. e. in old perſons, the intellectual powers and faculties, which are as lights in the ſoul, ſhall be weakened. And then do "the clouds return after rain;" i e. their diſtempers are frequent, like a continual dropping in a very rainy day, and the ending of one is but the beginning of another." Ver. 3. "Then the keepers of the houſe do tremble;" i. e. the head and hands, which were employed for the preſervation of the body, do ſhake. "The ſtrong men bow themſelves;" the legs and thighs, which are the pillars of the houſe, become weak and feeble. "The grinders eaſe, becauſe they are few;" i. e. the

the teeth, which, like the upper and nether milſtone, do grind our meat, and prepare it for concoction, then ceaſe to do their part. "Thoſe that look out of the windows are darkened," *i. e.* The eyes wax dim, whereby God calls us to turn them away from beholding vanity, and to look after the things that are not ſeen, ver. 4. "The daughters of muſic are brought low:" *i. e.* They have neither voice nor ears; they can neither ſing themſelves, nor take pleaſure in the voice of ſinging men or ſinging women. Then death pulls us, as it were, by the ear, to think on the muſic above, ver 5. "The almond tree flouriſheth;" *i. e.* The hair grows white, like an almond tree in the bloſſom. And, as the outward parts of the body do weaken and decay, ſo alſo do the inward parts: Therefore it is ſaid, ver. 6. "The ſilver cord ſhall be looſed, the golden bowl broken, the pitcher broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the ciſtern:" *i. e.* The ſilver cord of the ſinews is looſed, which carries the faculty of ſenſe and motion from the head through the body. The head, which, like a golden bowl or box, contains the brain, that is the fountain of ſenſe and motion, through age is broken, and turns crazy. The many pitchers of the veins, which carry the nouriſhing blood from the well of the liver unto each part of the body, become like broken veſſels. And the wheel of the arteries, which convey the vital ſpirits from the heart to the ſeveral members for quickening them, begin to turn faint and languid. All theſe things do warn old perſons to take their affections off time's things, and ſet them on things above, that they may be helped to ſay, we "deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt."

But, after all, ſome believers will have objections againſt willingneſs to die, ſome whereof I ſhall conſider.

Object. I. "I am threatened to be cut off in the flower of mine age."

Anſ. Inſtead of fretting on this account, you ought rather to adore and praiſe a gracious God, that is willing to beſtow the reward of the whole day upon thee, who haſt only laboured ſome hours of it. Praiſe him, that

that is willing to take you ſoon home; whereby you will prevent much ſin and ſorrow in the world.

Object. II. "I have houſes and lands, and a comfortable dwelling on the earth."

Anſ. Theſe are only needful in your paſſage through the world; above there is no uſe for theſe comforts. There God provideth manſions for his people, a thouſand times more comfortable, John xiv. 2.—2 Cor. v. 1. Surely houſes of God's building, and of Chriſt's furniſhing, are preferable to the cottages built by mens hands.

Object. III. "But I am loth to leave God's ordinances, and the ſweet communion I have had with him therein."

Anſ. Above there will be no need of ordinances, ſacraments, Bibles, or miniſters; for the Lamb will be the light of the heavenly temple, and all hid things in religion will be diſcovered in Chriſt's face. There you will celebrate an eternal Sabbath, drink the fruit of the vine new with Chriſt, be ever with the Lord, without any cloud or interruption of your communion with him. Is it any loſs to be taken from the ſhallow ſtreams, and ſet by the fountain that is ever full and running over.

Object. IV. "I am loth to leave the company of godly friends and relations."

Anſ. Death will take you to your friend Chriſt, that is far better than them all. And for one friend you loſe upon earth, you ſhall find an hundred in heaven; and theſe godly relations you leave here, you ſhall ſoon meet with them again there; where you will have far more ſweet communion than poſſibly you can have upon earth with them, or the beſt of them, who, while here, have ſeveral infirmities and paſſions, that many times make their converſe uncomfortable.

Object. V. "But I would fain ſee the glory of Zion upon earth, when God's promiſes to her ſhall be accompliſhed."

Anſ.

Anſ. So Moſes would fain have ſeen Iſrael's happineſs in the promiſed land: But his dying in the firm belief of God's fulfilling all his promiſes to them there, was more acceptable to God, than his beholding the performance. And the glory of the church militant, is a ſight nothing comparable to that of the church triumphant above.

Object. VI. "But I would incline to ſtay to do God more ſervice in his church below, whoſe neceſſities are claimant."

Anſ. 1. You will not want opportunity for ſerving and glorifying God above, and where you will be in a far better caſe for it. Here, our hearts are often out of tune for God's work, and we are forced to hang our harps upon the willows; but above there are no willows to hang them on; no ſaint there will ever complain of any indiſpoſition of heart or tongue.

2. God knows the neceſſities of his church, and is more concerned for them than thou canſt be; and it is eaſy for him to raiſe up inſtruments to carry on his work when thou are gone.

Object. VII. "I am afraid of the pain and pangs of death. The thoughts of theſe make me ſhrink back."

Anſ. 1. Many die without much ſeeming ſenſe of pain, and it is probable have leſs pain at the hour of death, than they have felt under ſeveral former diſeaſes.

2. If they be ſharp, they are ſoon over; and each pang of death will ſet ſin a ſtep nearer the door, and thy ſoul a ſtep nearer home: And therefore, it becometh a Chriſtian to die cheerfully, and to be glad when he can find the grave.

Now, what I have ſaid in this chapter, is to the believing ſoul: For it is no wonder though the ſouls of the ungodly, at death, ſhrink back into the body, and tremble to go forth, when they can have no proſpect of any better lodging than utter darkneſs.

DIRECT.

DIRECT. V. Study to imitate the ancient worthies, by dying in faith.

THIS was the character and epitaph of the Old-Teſtament ſaints, Heb. xi. 13. "Theſe all died in faith." As they had lived in faith, ſo they died in faith. They not only continued true believers to the laſt, dying in the ſtate of faith, but they died in the exerciſe of faith alſo. Now, the exerciſe of faith in dying, includes ſeveral things worthy to be imitated by all dying believers.

1. An open and profeſſed adherence to the doctrine of faith, and truths of Chriſtianity. This faith all Chriſtians ſhould zealouſly own in the view of death, and perſevere in it to the laſt, without wavering. This would be to die like martyrs, though we die in our beds. How ſtedfaſtly did old Polycarp adhere to Chriſt and his truths to the laſt, and ſo did in faith? When he was urged by the Proconſul to deny Chriſt, he anſwered, "Theſe fourſcore and ſix years have I ſerved him, and he never once offended me: and how ſhall I now deny him."

2. Dying in faith imports an inward, hearty, and firm belief of the fundamental articles of the Chriſtian faith; and improving them ſo, as to make them the foundation of our comfort and hope at the hour of death. As, for inſtance, we muſt yield our departing ſouls, in the firm belief of their living and exiſting in a ſeparate condition after this life, and of that future ſtate of bleſſedneſs and reſt which God hath prepared for all believers. Again, we muſt diſmiſs the body to the grave, in a firm belief and hope of a joyful reſurrection at the laſt day. Thus that holy man Job both lived and died in faith, Job xix. 25. 26. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth. And though, after my ſkin, worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God." A Chriſtian then dies in faith, when he believes theſe truths ſo, as cheerfully to obey God's call, and venture into the inviſible world, upon the teſtimony which God hath

ith given concerning it; As Abraham did in going out
o an unknown land, Heb. xi. 8. "By faith Abraham,
hen he was called to go out into a place which he
ould after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he
ent out, not knowing whither he went."

3. The believer dies in faith, when he makes freſh
pplication to Chriſt as his only hope and Saviour, takes
im in his arms of faith, as old Simeon did before his
eath, ſaying, "In the Lord Jeſus Chriſt I have right-
eouſneſs and ſtrength;" though I have neither righteouſ-
neſs nor ſtrength in myſelf, yet I have both in him, my
leſſed Surety and Redeemer. We have many uſes for
aith in Chriſt at the hour of death. By faith we muſt
epend upon Chriſt's blood for making atonement, and
waſhing away the guilt of all our bypaſt ſins. By faith
ve muſt put on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, for cover-
ng our naked ſouls, when they are to appear and ſtand
efore God. By faith we muſt rely on Chriſt for
trength to ſuffer pain, reſiſt temptations, to conquer
eath and all our enemies. By faith we muſt look to
hriſt as our leader, and truſt him for our ſafe conduct
hrough the dark valley of death, and for our ſafe land-
ng on the ſhore of glory.

4. The believer dies in faith, when he truſts his de-
arting ſoul with confidence in his Redeemer's hand,
aying with Paul 2 Tim. i. 12. "I know whom I have
elieved, and am perſuaded that he is able to keep that
hich I have committed to him againſt that day." This
as the Pſalmiſt's practice, Pſal. xxxi. 5 "Into thy
and I commit my ſpirit; for thou haſt redeemed me,
) Lord God of truth." So the man who dies in faith,
ommits the jewel of his ſoul to his Redeemer's keep-
ng, and confides in his care of it. Why? He made
; he hath redeemed it, he loves it; it is his own, a
ember of his body, and he will not hate his own fleſh.
le loves his dying ſaints much better than we love an
ye, a hand, or any other member of our body, which,
o be ſure, we will not loſe, if it be in our power to
ave it.

5. Dying in faith imports, that the dying ſaint con-
ides in God's faithfulneſs and truth for making good

all his promiſes to his church and people after his death, which are not yet accompliſhed. We ſhould go off the ſtage in the firm belief of God's fulfilling all his promiſes concerning the proſperity of his church, the calling of the Jews, the deſtruction of Anti-Chriſt, and the ſecond coming of our Lord; and likewiſe concerning our families, that God will be as good as his word, and be a father to the fatherleſs, and a huſband to the widow.

Would we then be ſo happy as to die in faith, let us take theſe advices:

1. Let us be careful to get faith before-hand; for death is a time to uſe faith, not to get it. They were fooliſh virgins who had their oil to buy when the bridegroom was come.

2. Study to live every day in the exerciſe of faith, and be ſtill improving and making uſe of Chriſt in all his offices, and for all theſe ends and uſes for which God hath given him to believers.

3. Be frequently clearing up your evidences for heaven, and beware of letting ſin blot them to you.

4. Record and lay up the experiences of God's kind dealings with you, and be often reflecting upon them, that you may have them ready at hand in the hour of death.

Laſtly, Meditate much on theſe promiſes, which have been ſweet and comfortable to you in the time of ſtraits; and beg that the Lord may bring them to your remembrance when you come to die.

DIRECT. VI. Set the Examples of other dying Saints before you, and ſtudy in like manner to ſhine in Grace, and be exemplary in Piety and Heavenly Diſcourſe, for the Glory of God, and Good of Souls, when you are going off the Stage.

THIS is the laſt opportunity you have of doing ſervice to God, and the intereſt of religion; wherefore, ſtrive to improve it diligently for the honour of God, and

and the edification of thoſe that ſurvive you. How pleaſant is it to ſee God's people leaving the world, commending Chriſt and his ſervice, and perfuming the place they lie in with their laſt breath? I have, Chap. III. Direct. V. and VI. adduced ſeveral motives to preſs this point, and given directions concerning the ſpeech and behaviour of the children of God when on ſick-beds, which I ſhall not repeat.

That which I deſign here is, to ſet before you the examples of ſome eminent ſaints, and their examplary, pious, and holy ſpeeches and ſayings, when they were a dying; and that, in order to confirm and eſtabliſh others in religion, and alſo to excite them to imitate thoſe ſhining worthies, when they alſo come to die. Surely it is for this very end that God hath ordered us to be compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, Heb. xii. 1. Thus doth the Apoſtle improve their example, Heb. xi. 1. And how earneſt is he in this matter? Heb. vi. 11. 12. "And we deſire that every one of you do ſhow the ſame diligence, to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end; that ye be not ſlothful, but followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promiſes."

I ſhall begin with ſome examples from the Sacred Hiſtory; and, in the firſt place, with the King of Saints, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. O how ſweet and comfortable were his diſcourſes unto his diſciples, when his death drew nigh! and, what a heavenly prayer did he make for them and all his elect ones at that time! Theſe we have recorded in the xiv. xv. xvi. and xvii. chapters of John; which are moſt ſeaſonable at all times for us to read and meditate upon, but eſpecially when death is approaching. And, likewiſe, let us read the hiſtory of our Lord's paſſion, in which we may obſerve the wonderful expreſſions of his faith in God, his patience under ſufferings, his pity to his enemies, his love to his mother and his diſciples, his concern for his Father's glory, his obedience in his death, and his willingneſs to be offered up. Thus the bleſſed Sun of Righteouſneſs did ſhine forth moſt gloriouſly at his ſetting, with the

radiant beams of his heavenly graces and virtues: and herein he hath ſet himſelf a pattern to all dying ſaints to the end of the world.

Jacob, when he was on his death-bed, called his ſons together, and gave them many ſpecial charges and bleſſings; we have his excellent words recorded in Gen. xlviii. and xlix. chapters. And, in particular, how ſweetly doth he ſpeak of the coming of the Meſſiah to them? Gen. xlix. 10. 18.; and how affectionately doth he commend God's goodneſs and kind providence towards him through his life? Gen. xlviii. 15. 16. "The God which fed me all my life long unto this day," &c.

Joſeph, when he was a-dying, ſpoke lovingly to his brethren, who had dealt cruelly with him; and aſſured them of the Lord's faithfulneſs in keeping his promiſe to their fathers, Gen. l. 20. "I die, and God will ſurely viſit you, and bring you out of this land."

Moſes, when he was to go up to mount Nebo, to die there, left many bleſſings, and gave many weighty charges to the children of Iſrael; we have his holy and raviſhing words recorded, Deut. xxxii. and xxxiii. chapters, And, particulary, how pleaſantly doth he commend God and his ways to the people! Deut. xxxii. 4 "He is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity; juſt and right is he."

Joſhua, when he was near his end, gave many ſolemn charges and exhortations to the people, which we have narrated, Joſh. xxiii. and xxiv. chapters. And there we may ſee the remarkable methods he takes to rivet impreſſions and convictions upon them, now when he can inſtruct them no longer. And particularly he appeals to their conſciences concerning the faithfulneſs of God in keeping his word to them, that ſo he might engage them to fidelity to him, Joſh. xxiii. 14. "And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth, and you know in all your hearts and in all your ſouls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God ſpake concerning you."

David,

David, when his end was near, aſſembled the people, and ſolemnly charged them, as in the audience of God, to keep his commandments, 1 Chron. xxviii. 8. 9. And particularly he charged his ſon and ſucceſſor Solomon, to "know the God of his father, and to ſerve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind."

The Apoſtle Paul, when taking his laſt farewell of the elders of Epheſus, moſt ſolemnly charges them, to "take heed to themſelves, and the flocks over which the Holy Ghoſt had made them overſeers," Acts xx. 28. And how ſweetly doth he ſing in the view of approaching death, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8. "I am now ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous judge, ſhall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto them alſo that love his appearing."

In imitation of thoſe ſcripture-ſaints, the people of God, in all ages, have ſtudied to glorify God and edify men at their death, by commending God and godlineſs to their friends and families. Thoſe we ought to teach by our example, both how to live and how to die, as others have done before us. Thus ſaid once a dying ſaint to his family, "I have formerly taught you how to live, and now I teach you how to die."

Now, becauſe in all ages the ſpeeches of dying Chriſtians have been much obſerved, that God hath remarkably bleſſed them to the eſtabliſhment and confirmation, quickening and exciting, of others to imitate them; I ſhall bring ſeveral examples from human hiſtories and writings, and moſtly from Clark's Lives, of ſundry eminent ſaints, whoſe graces have ſhone brighteſt, and their ſpeeches were moſt heavenly, when the ſun of their life was at the ſetting.

1. That old diſciple, Polycarp, when he came to the ſtake at which he was burnt, deſired to ſtand untied, ſaying, "Let me alone; for he that gave me ſtrength to come to the fire, will give me patience to endure the flame without your tying."

2. So

2. So holy Cyprian triumphed over death, ſayin "Let him only fear death, who muſt paſs from th death to the ſecond death. When he heard the ſe tence of death pronounced againſt him, he ſai "I thank God for freeing me from the priſon of th body."

3. Baſil, when the Emperor Valens ſent his office to tempt him with great preferments to turn from th faith, he rejected them with ſcorn, ſaying, "You ma offer theſe things to children." And when they threa ened him with ſufferings, he ſaid, "Threaten you purple gallants with theſe things, that give themſelv to their pleaſures."

When Modeſtus the Prefect threatened Baſil to con fiſcate his goods, to torment him, to baniſh him, or ki him, he anſwered, "He need not fear confiſcation tha hath nothing to loſe; nor baniſhment, to whom heave only is a country; nor torments, when his body woul be daſhed with one blow; nor death, which is the onl way to ſet him at liberty." The Prefect telling him h was mad, he ſaid, *Opto me in æternum ſic delirare*, "I wiſh I may forever be thus mad."

4. Ignatius being led from Syria to Rome to be tor in pices of wild beaſts, he expreſſed his fear leſt it ſhoul happen to him as to ſome others, that the lions, out o a kind of reverence, would not dare to touch him. An therefore he often wiſhed, "That their appetites migh be whetted to diſpatch him. For (ſays he) the lion teeth are but like a mill, which, though it bruiſeth, ye waſteth not the good wheat, only prepares and fits it t be made pure bread. Let me be broken by them, ſo may be made pure manchent for heaven."

5. The great Mr Knox, our Reformer, when he la a-dying, was much in prayer, ever crying, "Com Lord Jeſus; ſweet Jeſus, into thy hands I commen my ſpirit." Being aſked, by thoſe that attended him, his pain was great? he anſwered, that "He did n eſteem that a pain, which would be to him the end all trouble, and the begginning of eternal joys." Of times, after ſome deep meditations, he ſaid, "O ſer

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the Lord in fear, and death ſhall not be terrible to you: bleſſed is the death of thoſe that have part in the death of Jeſus."

After a ſore temptation from Satan (which I formerly mentioned) over which he triumphed at length, he ſaid, "Now the enemy is gone away aſhamed, and ſhall no more return. I am ſure now my battle is at an end, and that without pain of body, or trouble of ſpirit, I ſhall ſhortly change this mortal and miſerable life, with that happy and immortal life, which ſhall never have an end." After one had prayed for him, he was aſked, whether he heard the prayer? He anſwered, "Would to God you had heard it with ſuch an ear and heart as I have done!" Adding, "Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit." With which words, without any motion of hands or feet, as one falling aſleep, rather than dying, he ended his life.

6. Dr Gouge, when he was old and dying, was ſore afflicted with the ſtone, and other painful maladies; yet though, by reaſon of his pains, he was often heard to groan, he never once grumbled againſt the diſpenſations of God: He never cried out, *A great ſufferer*, but often, *A great ſinner*: Yet ſtill comforted himſelf, that there is a great Saviour. In his greateſt torments he would ſay, "Well, yet in all theſe there is nothing of hell, or of God's wrath. O my ſoul, be ſilent, be patient. It is thy God and Father that thus orders thine eſtate. Thou art his clay; he may tread and trample upon thee as he pleaſeth, thou haſt deſerved much more. It is enough that thou art kept out of hell, though thy pains be grievous, yet they are not intolerable, thy God affords ſome intermiſſions; he will turn it to thy good, and at length put an end to all; and none of theſe comforts can be expected in hell." In his greateſt pains, he often uſed holy Job's words, "Shall we receive good from the hands of the Lord, and not evil alſo?" When any of his friends would have comforted him, with telling him of his eminent gifts and ſervice in the miniſtry, he would anſwer, "I dare not think of any ſuch thing for comfort: Only Jeſus Chriſt, and what he hath done and endured, is the ground of my

ſure

ſure comfort." The thoughts of death were pleaſant to him, which he often termed, his beſt friend, next unto Jeſus Chriſt. And he would bleſs God, that he had nothing to do, but to die.

7. I have read of another miniſter under the like extreme pains. When he was aſked how he did? His frequent anſwer was: "The buſh always burning but not conſumed; though my pains are above the ſtrength of nature, yet they are not above the ſupports of grace. He would pray, Lord, drop comfort into theſe bitter waters of Marah. Let the blood of ſprinkling, which extinguiſheth the fire of thine anger, allay my burning pain. Oh, if my patience were more, my pains would be leſs; Lord, give me patience, and inflict what thou wilt. This is a fiery chariot, but it will carry me to heaven. O my God, break open the priſon-door, and ſet my poor captive ſoul free: I deſire to be diſſolved, but enable me willingly to wait thy time." He would cry again, "when ſhall the time come, that I ſhall neither ſin more nor ſorrow more; Lord, keep me from diſhonouring thy name by impatience. Oh, who would not, even in burnings, have honourable thoughts of God! Lord, thou giveſt me no occaſion to have hard thoughts of thee. Bleſſed be God, for the peace of mine inward man, when my outward man is ſo full of trouble. This is a bitter cup, but it is of my Father's mixing; and, ſhall I not then drink it?"

8. Mrs Jane Aſkew, who was a martyr in king Henry's reign, to her confeſſion in Newgate, ſhe thus ſubſcribed: written by me Jane Aſkew, that neither wiſheth death, nor feareth its might, and as merry as one bound towards heaven. When the Chancellor ſent her letters at the ſtake, offering her the king's pardon, if ſhe would recant; ſhe, refuſing to look upon them, gave this anſwer; "that ſhe came not thither to deny her Lord and Maſter."

9. Mr James Bainham, when he was at the ſtake, in the midſt of the burning fire which had half conſumed his legs and arms, ſpake theſe words: "O ye Papiſts! behold ye look for miracles, and here now ye may ſee a miracle,

miracle; for in this fire I feel no more pain than if I were on a bed of down; it is to me as a bed of roſes."

10. John Lambert, as he was burning in Smithfield, and his legs were quite conſumed with the fire, he lift up his hands, his fingers flaming like torches, but his heart abounding with comfort, crying out, "None but Chriſt, none but Chriſt."

11. Mr Robert Glover, a little before his death, had loſt the ſenſe of God's favour, for which he was in great heavineſs and ſorrow; but when he came within ſight of the ſtake at which he was to ſuffer, he was on a ſudden ſo filled with divine comfort, that, clapping his hands together, he cried out to his ſervant, "He is come, he is come;" and ſo died moſt cheerfully.

12. It was a ſaying of Auguſtine, "Boughs fall off trees, and ſtones out of buildings; and, why ſhould it ſeem ſtrange that mortal men die!"

13. Mr John Dod had ſo violent a fever, that there was but little hope of his life; yet at length his phyſician coming to him, ſaid, "Now I have hope of your recovery." To whom Mr Dod anſwered, "You think to comfort me with this, but you make my heart ſad. It is as if you ſhould tell one, who had been ſore weather-beaten at ſea, and conceiving he was now arrived at the haven where his ſoul longed to be, that he muſt go back again to be toſſed with new winds and waves."

He would often ſay in his laſt ſickneſs, "I am not afraid to look death in the face. I can ſay, Death, where is thy ſting? death cannot hurt me."

He uſed to ſay, "The knowledge of two things would make one willing to die, viz. What heaven is, and that it is mine." "Yes," ſaid one, "if a man were ſure of that." To whom he anſwered, "Truly aſſurance is to be had; and, what have we been doing all this while?"

Some others of the ſayings of this holy man, were ſo pithy and remarkable, I cannot paſs them here.

Once Mr Dod coming to viſit a godly miniſter on his death-bed, who was much oppreſſed with melancholy, and complained to him, ſaying, "O Mr Dod, what will you ſay of him, who is going out of the world, and

can find no comfort?" To whom Mr Dod anſwere "What will you ſay of our Saviour Chriſt, who, wh he was going out of the world, found no comfort, b cried out, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſak me?" He ſaid of afflictions, they are God's portion which we may ſweeten by faith and faithful praye but we, for the moſt part, make them bitter, puttin into God's cup the evil ingredients of our impatienc and unbelief. He called death the friend of grac though it be the enemy of nature; for, whereas th word, ſacraments, and prayer, do but weaken ſin, deat kills it." He uſed to ſay, "A man is never in a har condition unleſs he have a hard heart, and canno pray." He inſtructed Chriſtians how they ſhoul never have a great nor laſting affliction, and that wa by looking upon the things that are not ſeen, whic are eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 17. 18. For, what can b great to him, that counts the world nothing? And what can be long to him, that counts his life but ſpan long? When he ſaw a Chriſtian look ſad, h would ſay, as Jonadab did to Amnon, "Art thou king's ſon, and looketſt ſo ill?" And, when ſuch com plained to him of their croſſes and loſſes, he would uſ the words of Eliphaz to Job, "Do the conſolations o God ſeem ſmall to you? God hath taken from yo your children, your goods, &c. but he hath not take from you himſelf, his Chriſt, nor his Spirit, nor heaven nor eternal life."

To a friend of his, that roſe from a mean to a grea eſtate, he ſent word, "That this was but as if he ſhoul go out of a boat into a barge or ſhip; but he ought ſe rioufly to remember, that, whilſt he was in this world he was but upon the floating ſea."

He often ſaid, that if it were lawful to envy any, h would envy thoſe that turn to God in their youth whereby they eſcape much ſin and ſorrow, and are lik Jacob, that ſtole the bleſſing betimes. He uſed t compare reproofs given in paſſion, to ſcalding potions which the patient could not take down; in reproofs we ſhould labour for meekneſs and wiſdom, uſing ſoft words, and hard arguments.

He

He was a moſt popular miniſter, but much perſecuted. Once he took a journey to ſee his father in-law, Mr Greenham, and to bemoan himſelf to him, upon account of his croſſes and hard uſage. Mr Greenham, having heard all he could ſay, anſwered him thus: "Son, ſon, when affliction lieth heavy, ſin lieth light." Mr Dod uſed often to bleſs God for this ſpeech, ſaying, if Mr Greenham had bemoaned him as he expected, he had done him much hurt. He forgot not this ſaying in his old age, but made excellent uſe of it for himſelf and others.

14. Œcolampadius, that famous divine of Switzerland, when lying on his death-bed, and being aſked, Whether the light did not offend him? He anſwered, pointing to his breaſt, "*Hic ſat lucis.* Here is abundance of light," meaning of comfort and joy. He aſked one of his friends, What news? His friend anſwered, None. "Then," ſaith he, "I will tell you ſome news; I ſhall preſently be with my Lord Chriſt."

15. A certain godly man, paſſing through his laſt ſickneſs with extraordinary calmneſs of conſcience, being aſked by ſome of his friends anent it, he anſwered, that he had ſtedfaſtly fixed his heart upon the ſweet promiſe, Iſa. xxvi. 3. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee; becauſe he truſteth in thee." And my God (ſaith he) hath graciouſly made it fully good unto my ſoul.

16. Mr Robert Bolton, miniſter at Broughton, well known by his writings, in time of his laſt ſickneſs, which was long and ſharp, often breathed out theſe words: "Oh, when will this good hour come? When ſhall I be diſſolved? When ſhall I be with Chriſt?" Being told, that to be diſſolved was indeed better for him, yet it would be better for the church that he would ſtay here; he anſwered, "If I have found favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and ſhew me both it and his habitation; but, if otherwiſe, lo, here I am, let him do what ſeemeth good in his eyes." Being aſked by another, if he would not be content to live, if it pleaſed God? He anſwered, "I grant that

life is a great bleſſing of God, neither will I neglect any means that may preſerve it; and do heartily ſubmit to God's will; but of the two, I infinitely deſire more to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt." He bade all that came to ſee him, make ſure of Chriſt before they came to die, and look upon the world now as a lump of vanity. He encouraged the miniſters that came to him, to be diligent and courageous in the work of the Lord, and not to faint nor droop for any affliction that ſhould ariſe thereupon.

When he found himſelf very weak, he called for his wife and children. He deſired her to bear his diſſolution, which was now at hand, with a Chriſtian fortitude; a thing he had been preparing her for by the ſpace of twenty years; and bade her make no doubt but ſhe ſhould meet him again in heaven. He exhorted his children to remember thoſe things he had frequently told them before; adding, "That he hoped and believed, that none of them durſt think to meet him at the great tribunal in an unregenerate ſtate.

Some of his pariſh coming to watch with him, it was moved, that as by his doctrine he had diſcovered to them the exceeding comforts that were in Chriſt, ſo he would now tell them what he felt in his own ſoul. Alas! (ſaid he) do you look for that of me now, that wants breath and ſtrength to ſpeak? I have told you enough in my miniſtry; but yet, to ſatisfy you, I am, by the wonderful mercies of God, as full of comfort as my heart can hold; and I feel nothing in my ſoul but Chriſt, with whom I heartily deſire to be." And obſerving ſome weeping, he looked to them, and ſaid, "Oh, what a deal ado there is before one can die."

When the pangs of death were upon him, being told that ſome of his dear friends were about him to take their laſt farewell, he cauſed himſelf to be raiſed up in his bed: And, after a few graſpings for breath, he ſaid, "I am now drawing on a pace to my diſſolution; hold out, faith and patience, your work will ſpeedily be at an end." And then, ſhaking them all by the hands, he prayed heartily and particularly for them; and deſired them

them to make ſure of heaven, and to bear in mind what he had formerly told them in his miniſtry; proteſting to them, that the doctrine he had preached to them for the ſpace of twenty years was the truth of God, as he ſhould anſwer it at the tribunal of Chriſt, before whom he ſhould ſhortly appear.

When he was ſtruggling with death, a very dear friend taking him by the hand, aſked him, if he felt not much pain: "Truly no (ſaid he) the greateſt I feel is your cold hand."

17. Mr John Holland, a godly miniſter, continued his uſual practice of expounding the ſcripture in his family to the laſt; and the day before his death, he called for the Bible, and, cauſing another read the eight chapter of the Romans, he diſcourſed upon it verſe by verſe; but on a ſudden, he ſaid, "O ſtay, your reading; what a brightneſs is this I ſee! Have you lighted up any candles?" A ſtander by ſaid, no, it is the ſunſhine (for it was about five o'clock in a clear ſummer's evening.) "Sun-ſhine! ſaith he, nay, it is my Saviour's ſhine. Now, farewel world; welcome heaven; the day-ſtar from on high hath viſited my heart: O ſpeak it when I am gone, and preach it at my funeral; God dealeth familiarly with man, I feel his mercy, I ſee his majeſty; whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell, God he knoweth; but I ſee things that are unutterable." And in this rapture he continued till he died.

18. I knew not long ago an eminently godly man G. M. that fell into ſeveral ſuch extraordinary raptures ſometime before his death, ſuch as his bodily ſtrength and ſpirit were not able to ſupport under, though he had no ſickneſs. Sometimes he was ſo ſwallowed up and overcome by the manifeſtations of God's love to his ſoul, that his words could not be well underſtood; his natural colour, heat, and ſtrength, would ſo go off, that all about him would conclude him to be dying: But, when he was able to get words uttered, they were ſo heavenly and raviſhing concerning the love of Chriſt, and freedom of grace, that by-ſtanders could not hear him without weeping. Sometimes miniſters, when they

came

came to viſit him, and found him in theſe raptures, were forced to turn all their prayers in his behalf into praiſes, except ſome petitions they would put up to God, "that he might graciouſly ſpare and be tender of his weak body, and enable him to bear that load of loving-kindneſs God was pleaſed to let out to him, and which his preſent bodily ſtrength was not ſufficient for." Yea, they would be put to cry, "Lord, if it be thy will, hold thy hand, for he is but a clay veſſel; this new wine will burſt the old bottle; preſerve him in life as a monument of the rich grace of God, for the conviction of Atheiſts and carnal people, and for the confirmation of the faith of the children of God." Some times he would cry, in abrupt expreſſions, "O angels, help me to praiſe him! O ſaints, admire his love, and wonder at him. Again, O flames of love! My ſoul ſeeth Chriſt! The heavens open! I ſee a throne, and the Lamb in the midſt of the throne! O what think ye of Chriſt? My ſoul breathes,—breathes towards him! My ſpirit is exhaled out of me by the manifeſtations of God." He uſed frequently to ſay, with a heavenly air, to his friends, "O what think ye of Chriſt?" When his extaſy did ſomewhat abate, ſo that he attained a pleaſant calmneſs of thought, and freedom of ſpeech, he would diſcourſe of the myſteries of religion, the electing love of God, the freedom of grace, the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, and the glorious contrivance of redemption through his death and ſacrifice! I ſay, he would talk of theſe things more like an angel than a man. For ſuch was his heavenly eloquence, fluency of words, and facility of ſpeaking upon theſe ſubjects, (which otherwiſe was not natural to him) that thoſe who came to ſee him were exceedingly ſurpriſed and aſtoniſhed to hear him. His body gradually weakened under theſe raptures of ſpirit, and he longed much to be off the world, becauſe he could be ſo little uſeful in it for advancing God's honour. He reckoned himſelf bound to improve the ſhort time he was like to have here, in commending Chriſt and religion to all that he had acceſs to, and alſo to admoniſh them of any thing he knew amiſs in them, which he did more convincing

convincingly. And having occaſion to ſee ſome who vilipended the eſtabliſhed church, and the ordinances diſpenſed in it; he highly commended the ordinances, and told them, that from his own ſweet experience he could ſay, that God was to be found in them. He ſeemed to have ſin wonderfully mortified; for he complained of no other heart-plague but ſelf, and it was his great exerciſe to get ſelf wholly ſubdued; he purſued it through many of its windings and lurking places, and, after all, he would regret his little ſucceſs againſt it.

"For," ſaith he "when I am in my moſt elevated frames, and admitted to the neareſt acceſs to my Redeemer, that ſubtile enemy, ſelf, will enter in with me and offer to pull the crown off his head before my face."

Once, after hearing a ſermon on Pſal. lxxxv. 8. "I will hear what God the Lord will ſpeak," he broke out in a rapturous diſcourſe to one that came to ſee him, bleſſing God that he had ſpoke to him in that ſermon, "O (ſaid he) what am I, that the rock of Iſrael ſhould have ſpoke to me theſe three ſermon-days bygone, aſſuring me that all my ſins are forgiven? What am I, a vile worm, that he ſhould be ſo kind and condeſcending, as to diſcover Chriſt and heaven in ſuch a manner to me, and aſſure me that I will ſhortly be with him? Oh I thought that I had ſinned him away from me, but I ſee he will not bide away! O admirable free grace? O help me to praiſe him!"

When death drew near, there was ſome alteration in his caſe; yet he never queſtioned his intereſt in Chriſt; but ſtill aſſerted, "I know he is my God and Rdeemer, and I ſhall be ſhortly with him." And once, when he was ready to complain for want of God's wonted manifeſtations, he ſaid, the Lord knew his body was now weak, and could not bear what formerly he had met with, yet (ſaid he) glory to his name, he hath given me three blinks ſince my laſt illneſs began.

19. Dr Harris, head of Trinity college in Oxford, in his laſt ſickneſs uſed to exhort all about him to get faith above all things. "It is (ſaid he) your victory, your

your peace, your life, your crown, and your chiefeſt piece of ſpiritual armour. Howbeit, get on all other pieces, and go forth in the Lord's might: ſtand to the fight, and thy iſſue ſhall be glorious. Only forget not to call in the help of your general: do all for him and under him." On the Lord's day he would not have any kept from the ordinances on his account; and, when they returned from the ſermons, he would ſay to them, "Come, what have you for me?" And when any gave him an account of what they had heard, he would reſume the heads thereof, and ſay, "O what excellent truths are theſe! Lay them up carefully, for you will have need of them." When friends came to viſit him, he would ſay, "I cannot ſpeak, but I can hear." Being aſked, where his comfort lay? he anſwered, "In Chriſt, and in the free grace of God."

One telling him that he might take much comfort in his labours, and the good he had done; his anſwer was, "All is nothing without a Saviour; without him my beſt works would condemn me. Oh, I am aſhamed of them, they are ſo mixed with ſin. I have done nothing for God as I ought,——Oh, loſs of time ſits very heavy upon my ſpirits. Work, work apace; aſſure yourſelves nothing will more trouble you when you come to die, than that you have done no more for God, who hath done ſo much for you."

Sometimes he uſed thus to breathe out himſelf, "I never in all my life ſaw the worth of a Chriſt, nor taſted the ſweetneſs of God's love in that meaſure, as now I do."——Being aſked by miniſters, what they ſhould chiefly requeſt for him? He anſwered, do not only pray for me, but praiſe God that he ſupports me, and keeps off ſatan from me, in my weakneſs; beg that I may hold out. I am now a great way home, near the ſhore, I leave you toſſing on the ſea; Oh, it is a good time to die in.

In all his latter-wills which he made, he took care this legacy ſhould ſtill be inſerted; "*Item*, I bequeath to all my children, and to their children's children, to each of them a Bible, with this inſcription, NONE BUT

BUT CHRIST." He uſed to ſay, "it is a hard thing for a ſaint to forgive himſelf ſome faults, when God hath forgiven them."

20. David Chitræus, when he lay a-dying, lift up his head from the pillow to hear the diſcourſes of his friends that ſat by him, and ſaid, "that he ſhould die with the greateſt comfort, if he might die learning ſomething.

21. Mr Cooper, when a-dying, ſaid, "I ſaw not my children when they were in the womb, yet there the Lord fed them without my care or knowledge. I ſhall not ſee them when I go out of the body, yet ſhall they not want a father. Again, death is ſomewhat weary, and the ſtreams of that Jordan between us and our Canaan run furiouſly, but they ſtand ſtill when the ark comes."

22. The Rev. Mr Halyburton, that ſhining light in St Andrew's, when a-dying, commended Chriſt and holineſs with great earneſtneſs to all that came to ſee him. He exhorted his brethren to diligence in the miniſtry. "It was the delight of my heart (ſaid he) to preach the goſpel: I deſired to decreaſe, that the bridegroom might increaſe, and to be nothing, that he might be all. I repent I did not more for him. O that I had the tongues of men and angels, to praiſe him." When he was adviſed to lie quiet, he ſaid, "Wherefore ſhould a man beſtow his laſt breath, but in commending the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, God clothed in our nature, dying for our ſins."

He cauſed read one of Mr Rutherford's letters; viz. that to Mr John Main, and thereafter ſaid, that is a book I would recommend to you all, there is more practical religion in that letter, than in a book of a larger volume."

He exhorted ſome miniſters, that came to ſee him, to faithfulneſs. "As for the work of the miniſtry (ſaid he) it was my deliberate choice: were my days lengthened out much longer, and days as troubleſome as they are like to be, I would rather be a contemned miniſter of God, than the greateſt prince on earth." He ſaid,

when taking farewell of his wife, children, and ſervants, "Here is a demonſtration of the reality of religion, that I, a poor, weak, timorous man, as much afraid of death as any, am now enabled, by the power of grace, compoſedly, and with joy, to look death in the face. I dare look it in the face in its moſt ghaſtly ſhape, and hope within a little to have the victory. I cannot but commend the Lord Jeſus. As far as my words will go, I muſt proclaim it, he is the beſt Maſter that ever I ſaw." To his ſon, who was a child, he ſaid, "if I had as many ſons as there are hairs in your head, I would beſtow them all on God." To ſome preſent he ſaid, "O ſirs, I dread mightily that a rational ſort of religion is coming in among us; I mean by it, a religion that conſiſts in a bare attendance on outward duties and ordinances, without the power of godlineſs; and thence people ſhall fall into a way of ſerving God, which is mere Deiſm, having no relation to Chriſt Jeſus and the Spirit of God."——He expreſſed his fears of a ſtorm coming on the church of Scotland; but he ſaid, the day will break, and the Lord would ariſe, and he hoped the church would be made a wonder, and the Lord will ſay, "Lo this people have I formed for myſelf; he can make a nation to be born at once." He cried often with the ſpouſe in the Song: "When ſhall the day break, and the ſhadows fly away? Turn my beloved, and be thou as a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Bether."

He ſaid, "Shall I forget Zion? Nay, let my right hand forget her cunning, if I prefer not Jeruſalem to my chiefeſt joy. O to have God returning to this church, and his work going on in this world! if every drop of my blood, every bit of my body, every hair of my head, were all men; they ſhould all go to the fire to have this going on."——He ſaid, "If I ſhould ſay that I would ſpeak no more in the name of the Lord, it would be like a fire within me. I am calling you to ſee a miracle, God is melting me down into corruption and duſt, and yet he is keeping me in a calm.——I could not believe that I would have borne, and borne cheerfully, this rod ſo long; this is a miracle,

pain

without pain; and this is not a fancy of a man dered in his brain, but of one lying in full compo-

. O bleſſed be God, that ever I was born. I have her and a mother, and ten brethren and ſiſters in en, and I ſhall be the eleventh. I ſhall ſhortly be at glory I have been long expecting: though I come ıear Mr Shield's glory, nor Mr Anderſon's, yet I be well enough if I get in. Worthy is the Lamb ceive glory."

ı. Mr Hugh Mackaill, in his ſpeech before his ı, ſaid, "I have eſteemed the ſolemn engage- ts of this nation to the Lord's pregnant performan- of that promiſe, Iſa. xliv. v. where it is evident, that re church-reformations come to any maturity, they e at this degree of ſaying, I am the Lord's, and ;ribing with the hand unto the Lord. So was it ıe days of the reforming kings of Judah, and after reſtoration from the captivity of Babylon, in the of Nehemiah. This ſame purpoſe did the Lord s make yea and Amen to us, when he redeemed rom ſpiritual Babylon.——I glorify him that he ı called me forth to ſuffer for his name and ordi- :es, and the ſolemn engagements of the land to . Hereafter I will not walk with fleſh and blood, think on the world's conſolations. Farewell all my ıds, whoſe company hath been refreſhful to me in pilgrimage. I have done with the light of the ſun moon. Welcome, eternal life, everlaſting love, ever- ng praiſe, everlaſting glory. Praiſe to him that ſits ı the throne, and to the Lamb for ever."

4. The famous Mr Durham being viſited by a mi- er in his laſt ſickneſs, which was long and lingering, ı ſaid to him, Sir, I hope you have ſet all in order, that you have nothing elſe to do but die. "I bleſs l (ſaid Mr Durham) I have not had that to do nei- theſe many years."

5. Mr Rowland Nevat his dying prayer for his dren was, that the Mediator's bleſſing might be the tion of every one of them. Adding to them, I rge you all, ſee to it, that you meet me on the right hand

hand of Chriſt at the great day. When he was times much ſpent with his labours, he would ap God, that, though he might be wearied in his ſ he would never be weary of it. Being often diſte ed in his body, he would ſay, he was never bette in the pulpit, and that it was the beſt place he wiſh to die in.

26. Mr Philip Henry, when a dying, his pains very ſharp; he ſaid to his neighbours who came ſee him, O make ſure work for your ſouls, by g an intereſt in Chriſt, while you are in health; I had that work to do now, what would become c A little before his laſt illneſs he wrote to a rev brother, "Methinks it is ſtrange, that it ſhou your lot and mine to abide ſo long on earth l ſtuff, when ſo many of our friends are dividin ſpoil above; but God will have it ſo; and to b ling to live in obedience to his holy will, is as tr act of grace, as to be willing to die when he One aſking him how he did, he anſwered, "I fin chips fly off apace, the tree will be down ſhortly." was ſometimes taken with fainting fits, which wh recovered from, he would ſay, "Dying is but a more." Once he ſaid, after a little recovery, " I thought I had been putting into the harbour, find I muſt go to ſea again."

27. Mr Matthew Henry his death was ſom ſudden: he ſaid a little before it to ſome about "You have been uſed to take notice of the ſayin dying men; this is mine, that a life ſpent in th vice of God and communion with him, is the comfortable and pleaſant life, that any one can l this world.

28. Holy and learned Mr Rutherford, a littl fore his death, left a written teſtimony to our cove ed work of reformation; and therein he prove warrantableneſs of nations entering into covenant God under the New Teſtament times, and ſhews this practice is the accompliſhment of ſeveral Teſtament prophecies, ſuch as Jer. l. 4, 5. Iſa.

Zech. viii. 2. Iſa. xix. 23, 24, 25. which relate to goſpel times. And when he was a dying, he ſent ſeveral meſſages to the preſbytery of St Andrew's, deſiring them to adhere to God's cauſe and covenant. In his ſickneſs he often broke out in ſacred raptures, extolling and commending the Lord Jeſus, whom he often called his bleſſed Maſter, his kingly King. When his death drew near, he ſaid, "I ſhall ſhine, I ſhall ſee him as he is, I ſhall ſee him reign, and all his fair company with him, and I ſhall have my large ſhare: my eyes ſhall ſee my Redeemer, thoſe very eyes of mine, and no other for me." When exhorting one to be diligent in ſeeking God, he ſaid, "it is no eaſy thing to be a Chriſtian; but for me, I have gotten the victory, and Chriſt is holding out both his arms to embrace me." He was wonderfully ſtrengthened againſt the fears of ſuffering and of death; for, ſays he, "I ſaid to the Lord, if he would ſlay me five thouſand times, I would truſt in him, and I ſpoke it with much trembling, fearing I ſhould not make my boaſt good. But as really as ever he ſpoke to me by his Spirit, he witneſſed unto my heart, that his grace ſhould be ſufficient for me." He ſaid to ſome miniſters that came to ſee him, "My Lord and Maſter is the chief of ten thouſand of thouſands! none is comparable to him in heaven or in earth. Dear Brethren, do all for him, pray for Chriſt, preach for Chriſt, feed the flock committed to your charge for Chriſt, viſit and catechiſe for Chriſt; do all for Chriſt, and beware of man-pleaſing. Feed the flock out of love, the chief ſhepherd will appear ſhortly." Once when he recovered from a fainting fit, he ſaid, I feel, I feel, I believe, I enjoy, I rejoice, I feed on manna." As he took a little wine in a ſpoon, Mr Robert Blair ſaid to him, you feed on the dainties of heaven, and think nothing of our cordials on earth. He ſaid, "they are all but dung, yet they are Chriſt's creatures, and, in obedience to his command, I take them." After ſome diſcourſe, Mr Blair ſaid to him, What think you now of Chriſt? To which he replied, "I ſhall live and adore him: Glory, glory, to my Creator, and to my Redeemer for ever. Glory ſhines in Emmanuel's land." Afterwards

wards he ſaid, " O that all my brethren did know what a Maſter I have ſerved, and what peace I have this day? I ſhall ſleep in Chriſt, and when I awake, I ſhall be ſatisfied with his likeneſs." Then he ſaid, " This night ſhall cloſe the door, and put my anchor within the veil, I ſhall go away in a ſleep by five o'clock in the morning:" which exactly fell out. That night, though he was very weak, he often had this expreſſion, O for arms to embrace him! O for a well-tuned harp!

When ſome ſpoke to him of his former painfulneſs and faithfulneſs in the work of God; he ſaid, " I diſclaim all that; the port I would be in at, is redemption and forgiveneſs of ſins through his blood." His laſt words were, " Glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land."

29. Hugh Kennedy, provoſt of Air, when he was a dying, a miniſter ſaid to him, you have cauſe, Sir, to be aſſured, that the angels of God are now waiting at the ſtoops of this bed to convey your ſoul to Abraham's boſom; to whom his anſwer was, " I am ſure thereof; and if the walls of this houſe could ſpeak, they could tell how many ſweet days I have had in fellowſhip with God, and how familiar he hath been with my ſoul." He was one of the greateſt wreſtlers with God that was in the age wherein he lived, and he had moſt remarkable returns of prayer. The great Mr Welſh, in a letter from France, ſaid of him, " Happy is that city, yea, happy is that nation, that hath a Hugh Kennedy in it; I have myſelf certainly found the anſwers of his prayers from the Lord in my behalf."

30. The great Mr Robert Bruce, miniſter of Edinburgh, when dying through weakneſs and old age, being aſked by one of his friends, how matters ſtood now between God and his own ſoul? anſwered, " When I was young I was diligent, and lived by faith in the Son of God, but now I am old, and not able to do ſo much; yet he condeſcends to feed me with lumps of ſenſe." That morning before he died, he came to breakfaſt at his table, and having eat, as he uſed, one ſingle egg; he ſaid to his daughter, I think I am yet hungry, you may

may bring me another. But preſently he fell into a deep meditation; and having muſed a while, he ſaid, "Hold, daughter, hold, my Maſter calls me." With theſe words his ſight failed him, whereupon he called for the Bible: but finding his ſight gone, he ſaid, "Caſt me up the eight chapter of the epiſtle to the Romans, and ſet my finger on theſe words, "I am perſuaded that neither death nor life, angels, &c. ſhall be able to ſeparate me from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus my Lord." Now, ſaid he, is my finger upon them? they told him it was. Then, without any more, he ſaid, "Now, God be with you, my children, I have breakfaſted with you, and ſhall ſup with my Lord Jeſus Chriſt this night." And ſo gave up the ghoſt.

31. John Stewart, provoſt of Ayr, was a ſingularly pious man, yet when he lay a-dying, he ſaid to ſome about him, "I go the way of all fleſh, and it may be ſome of you doubt nothing of my well being: yea, I teſtify, that except when I ſlept, or was on buſineſs, I was not theſe ten years without thoughts of God, ſo long as I would be in going from my own houſe to the croſs; and yet I doubt myſelf, and am in great agony, yea, at the brink of deſpair." But a day or two before he died, he turned his face to the wall from the company for two hours. Then Mr Ferguſon the miniſter coming in, aſked what he was doing? upon which he turned himſelf, with theſe words: "I have been fighting and working out my ſalvation with fear and trembling; and now I bleſs God, it is perfected, ſealed, confirmed, and all fears are gone."

32. Luther, when he fell ſick, made his will, in which he bequeathed his deteſtation of Popery to his friends, and to the paſtors of the church, having before made this verſe:

Peſtis eram vivus, moriens ero mors tua Papa.

In his laſt will, he ſaid, "O Lord God, I thank thee that thou wouldſt have me live a poor and indigent perſon upon earth. I have neither houſes nor lands, nor poſſeſſions,

poſſeſſions, nor money to leave. Thou, Lord, haſt given me a wife and children; them, Lord, I give back to thee. Nouriſh, inſtruct, and keep them. O thou, the Father of orphans, and judge of the widow, as thou haſt done to me, ſo do to them."

In his laſt prayer, February 18. 1546, he hath theſe words, "I pray God to preſerve his goſpel among us; for the Pope and Council of Trent have grievous things in hand. O heavenly Father, I give thee thanks that thou haſt revealed to me thy Son Jeſus Chriſt, whom I believe, whom I profeſs, whom I glorify, and whom the Pope and the rout of the wicked perſecute and diſhonour." Mr Fox ſaid of Luther, "that a poor friar ſhould be able to ſtand againſt the Pope, was a great miracle; that he ſhould prevail againſt the Pope, was greater; and, after all, to die in peace, having ſo many enemies, was the greateſt of all."

33. Mr Joſeph Allen, a moſt painful and laborious miniſter, being deprived of the uſe of his arms and legs before his death, was aſked by a friend, how he could be ſo well contented to lie ſo long in that condition? He anſwered, "What! is God my father, Jeſus Chriſt my ſaviour, and the Holy Spirit my ſanctifier and comforter; and ſhall I not be content without limbs and health? He is an unreaſonable wretch that cannot be content with a God, though he had nothing elſe."

When his people of Taunton came to Dorceſter to ſee him, where he lay; he was much revived, and would ſit up in his bed, have the curtains drawn by, and deſired them to ſtand round about the bed; and cauſed take out his hand and hold it out to them, that they might take it as he uſed formerly to do, when he had been abſent from them. And though very weak, yet he ſpoke to them thus: "O how it rejoiceth my heart to ſee your faces, and to hear your voices, though I cannot ſpeak as heretofore unto you. Methinks, I am now like old Jacob, with all his ſons about him. Now, you ſee my weak eſtate, thus I have been ſo many weeks ſince I parted with you, but God hath been with me. My friends, life is mine, death is

mine,

mine; in that covenant of which I preached to you, is all my ſalvation and all my deſire; although my body do not proſper, I hope through grace my ſoul doth. I have lived a ſweet life by the promiſes, and I hope through grace can die by a promiſe. It is the promiſes of God that will ſtand by us. Nothing but God in them will ſtead us in a day of affliction. My dear friends, I feel the power of thoſe doctrines I preached to you on my heart, the doctrines of faith, of repentance, of ſelf-denial, of the covenant of grace, of contentment, &c. O that you would live them over, now I cannot preach them to you. It is a ſhame for a believer to be caſt down under afflictions, that hath ſo many glorious privileges, juſtification, adoption, ſanctification, and eternal glory. We ſhall be as the angels of God in a little while; nay, to ſay the truth, believers are, as it were, little angels already, that live in the power of faith. O my friends, live like believers, trample this dirty world under your feet; be not taken with its comforts, nor diſquieted with its croſſes, you will be gone out of it ſhortly."

When they came to take leave of him, he would needs pray with them as his weak ſtate did ſuffer him. Then he ſaid, "Farewell, my dear friends; go home and live over what I have preached to you, and the Lord provide for you when I am gone. Now I cannot preach to you, but let my waſted ſtrength and uſeleſs limbs be a ſermon to you. I am afraid of ſome of you, after all I have ſpoken to you. There are many profeſſors who can pray well and talk well, whom we ſhall find at the left hand of Chriſt another day. You have your trades, your eſtates, your relations, be not taken with theſe, but with God; O live on him. For the Lord's ſake, go home, and take heed of the world, worldly cares, worldly comforts, worldly relations, &c. Oh! let not my labours and ſufferings, let not my waſted ſtrength, and uſeleſs limbs, riſe up in judgment againſt you at the great day of the Lord." Then he ſaid, "The Lord having given authority to his miniſters to bleſs his people, accordingly I bleſs you in his name, (uſing the words he always uſed after a ſacrament)

The Lord bleſs you and keep you, the Lord cauſe his face to ſhine upon you, and give you peace. And the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that great ſhepherd of the ſheep, through the blood of the everlaſting covenant; make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

In the mornings, his firſt ſpeeches would be (which he alſo uſed in his health) "Now we have one day more, this is one more for God, now let us live well this day, work hard for our ſouls; lay up much treaſure in heaven this day, for we have but a few to live."

Being taken to the bath, where he met with extraordinary kindneſs from ſtrangers, for many reſorted to him, to ſee him and hear him ſpeak, having heard what a monument of mercy he was: he did delight himſelf much in the conſideration of the Lord's kindneſs to him, and the tokens of ſtrangers their love, and would often ſay, "I was a ſtranger, and mercy took me in: in priſon, and it came to me; ſick and weak, and it viſited me."

N. B. He had been much perſecuted, and put in priſon, for no other crime but preaching the goſpel.

He had a moſt pious and affectionate wife that waited cloſely upon him, to whom he ſaid, "Now, my dear heart, my companion in all my tribulations and afflictions, I thank thee for all thy pains and labours for me at home and abroad, in priſon and liberty, in health and ſickneſs." And he prayed that the Lord would requite her, fill her with all manner of grace and conſolation, and ſupport and carry her through all difficulties.

He had ſome conflicts with ſatan a little before death; once he uttered theſe words, "Away, thou foul fiend, thou enemy of all mankind, thou ſubtile ſophiſter, art thou come now to moleſt me? Now I am juſt going! Now I am ſo weak, and death upon me! Trouble me not, for I am none of thine, I am the Lord's; Chriſt is mine, and I am his, his by covenant; I have ſworn myſelf to be the Lord's, and his I will be; therefore

be

e gone." Theſe laſt words he repeated often, as pleading his covenanting with God, as a mean to reſiſt the devil and his temptations. When he looked on his weak conſumed hands, he would ſay, "theſe ſhall be changed, this vile body ſhall be made like to Chriſt's glorious body. O what a glorious day will the day of the reſurrection be? Methinks I ſee it by faith; how will the ſaints lift up their heads and rejoice? and how ſadly will the wicked world look then? O come, let us make haſte, our Lord will come ſhortly! if we long to be in heaven, let us haſten with our work; for when that is done, away we ſhall be brought. O this vain, fooliſh, dirty world; I wonder how reaſonable creatures can ſo doat upon it! What is in it worth the looking after? I care not to be in it longer than while my Maſter hath either doing or ſuffering work for me; were that done, farewell to earth."

This eminent ſaint had this teſtimony given him by one; it may be ſaid of him, in as high a degree as of moſt ſaints on earth, that each thought was to him a prayer, each prayer a ſong, each day a Sabbath, each meal a ſacrament; and ſo his life on earth a foretaſte of that eternal repaſt to which he hath now arrived.

34. The noble Marquis of Argyle, being a zealous friend of our covenanted Reformation, was put to death May 27th 1661. His friends contrived methods for making his eſcape out of the caſtle of Edinburgh, but he thanked them, and told them, he would not diſown the good cauſe he had ſo publicly eſpouſed, but reſolved to ſuffer the utmoſt. When the ſentence of death was paſt by the Parliament, on Saturdy May 25th, he ſaid, "I had the honour to ſet the crown upon the king's head, and now he haſtens me to a better crown than his own." Then he was ſent to the Tolbooth. His excellent Lady embracing him when he entered, wept bitterly, ſaying ſeveral times, the Lord will requite it. Not any in the room could reſtrain from tears; but the Marquis himſelf was perfectly compoſed, and ſaid, "Forbear, forbear; truly I pity them, they know not what they are doing: they may ſhut me in where they pleaſe, but they cannot ſhut out

God from me. For my part, I am as content to b here as in the caſtle, and as content in the caſtle as i the tower of London," (where he was firſt put) " an as content upon the ſcaffold as any of them all."—— He added, that he remembered a ſcripture paſſage cited to him by an holy miniſter in the caſtle, and endeavoured to put in practice, when Ziklag was taken and burned, and the people ſpoke of ſtoning David, *he encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God.* All his ſhort time, till Monday, he ſpent with the greateſt ſerenity and chearfulneſs, and in the proper exerciſes of a dying Chriſtian. He ſaid to ſome miniſters, allowed to b with him in the priſon, that " ſhortly they would env him who was got before them." And added, " Min that I tell you, my ſkill fails me, if you who are mini ſters will not either ſuffer much, or ſin much; ſo though you go along with thoſe men in part, if you d it not in all things, you are but where you were, an ſo muſt ſuffer; and if you go not at all in with them you ſhall but ſuffer."

The Marquis was naturally timorous, but he deſire thoſe about him to obſerve, as he could not but de that the Lord had heard his prayer, and removed a fears from him. And indeed his friends work was t reſtrain and qualify his fervent longing after his diſſo lution, and not to ſupport him under the near views o it. The Lord was exceeding kind to him at this time for upon Monday morning (that day he ſuffered) whe he was in the midſt of company, and thronged in ſub ſcribing papers relating to his eſtate, he was ſo over come with a ſingular manifeſtation from God, that h broke out in a rapture and ſaid, " I thought to hav concealed the Lord's goodneſs, but it will not do; am now ordering my affairs, and God is ſealing m charter to a better inheritance, juſt now ſaying to me " Son, be of good chear, thy ſins are forgiven thee." After he had retired ſometime alone, when he opene ed the door, Mr Hutchinſon, one of the miniſters tha attended him, ſaid to him, what cheer, my Lord? H anſwered, good cheer, ſir, the Lord hath again confirm ed and ſaid to me, from heaven, " Son, be of goo

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cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee." And he guſhed out in abundance of tears of joy, ſo that he retired to the windows and wept there. Afterwards he ſaid, in a perfect rapture, to Mr Hutchinſon, "I think his kindneſs overcomes me; but God is good to me that lets not out too much of it here, for he knows I could not bear it: get my cloke, and let us go." But being told that the town clock was kept back, ſo that the hour was not yet come, he anſwered, they are far in the wrong; and preſently kneeled down and prayed before all preſent, in a moſt ſweet and heavenly manner, to the raviſhment of all that were there.

When he was going out to the ſcaffold, he ſaid, *I could die like a Roman, but I chooſe rather to die as a Chriſtian. Come away, gentlemen, he that goes firſt goes cleaneſt.* When going down, he called Mr James Guthrie to him, and embracing him in the moſt endearing way, took his farewell of him. Mr Guthrie at parting, addreſſed the Marquis, "My Lord, God hath been with you, he is with you, and God will be with you; and ſuch is my reſpect for your Lordſhip, that if I were not under the ſentence of death myſelf, I could cheerfully die for your Lordſhip." So they parted for a very ſhort ſeaſon, in two or three days to meet in a better place.

The Marquis, in his ſpeech on the ſcaffold, hath theſe words, "God hath laid engagements upon Scotland; we are tied by covenant to religion and reformation. Thoſe that were then unborn are engaged to it, and it paſſeth the power of any under heaven to abſolve a man from the oath of God."

35. Mr John Welſh, miniſter of the goſpel at Ayr, whom Mr Rutherfoord (in his preface to his ſurvey of Antinomianiſm) calls, that apoſtolic, heavenly and prophetical man of God, and there tells us, that he had it from thoſe that were witneſſes of his life, that of every twenty-four hours, he gave uſually eight to prayer, and that he ſpent many nights in prayer to God, interceding for ſuffering Proteſtants abroad, as well as for his mother-church. This holy man, when priſoner in the caſtle of Blackneſs, and in the view of death (being condemned

condemned to it for maintaining the liberties of this church, though afterwards the ſentence was changed into baniſhment) in his letter to a Chriſtian lady, hath theſe words:

" I long to eat of that tree which is planted in the midſt of the Paradiſe of God, and to drink of the pure river, clear as cryſtal, that runs through the ſtreet of the new Jeruſalem. I long to be refreſhed with the ſouls of them that are under the altar, who were ſlain for the word of God, and the teſtimony that they held and to have thoſe long white robes given me, that I may walk in white raiment with thoſe glorious ſaints who have waſhed their garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Why ſhould I think it a ſtrange thing to be removed from this place to the where my hope, my joy, my crown, my elder brother, my head, my father, my comforter, and all the glorious ſaints are, and where the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb is ſung joyfully; where we ſhall not be compelled to ſit by the rivers of Babylon, and hang up our harps on the willow trees, but ſhall take them up, and ſing the new Hallelujah, bleſſing, honour, glory and power, to him that ſits upon the throne and to the Lamb, for ever and ever? What is there under the old vault of the heavens and in this old worn earth, which is groaning under the bondage of corruption, that ſhould make me to deſire to remain here? I expect that new heaven and new earth wherein righteouſneſs dwelleth, wherein I ſhall reſt for evermore. I look to get entry into the new Jeruſalem at one of thoſe twelve gates, whereupon are written the names of the twelve tribes of Iſrael. I know that Jeſus Chriſt hath prepared them for me. Why, may I not then, with boldneſs in his blood, ſtep into that glory where my Head and Lord hath gone before me? Jeſus Chriſt is the door and the porter; who then ſhall hold me out? O thou faireſt among the children of men, the delight of mankind, the light of the Gentiles, the glory of the Jews, the life of the dead, the joy of angels and ſaints, my ſoul panteth to be with thee. I refuſe not to die with thee, that I may live with thee; I refuſe not to ſuffer with thee, that I may rejoice with thee. O when ſhall I be filled with his love! Surely, if a man knew ho-

how precious it is, he would count all things but droſs and dung to gain it. I long for that ſcaffold, or that axe, or that cord, that might be to me that laſt ſtep of this my wearifome journey, to go to thee, my Lord. Who am I, that he ſhould firſt have called me, and then conſtitute me a miniſter of the glad tidings of the goſpel of ſalvation theſe many years, and now, laſt of all, to be a ſufferer for his cauſe and kingdom? Theſe two points, 1. That Chriſt is the head of the church. 2. That ſhe is free in her government from all other juriſdiction, except Chriſt; yea, as free as any kingdom under heaven, not only to convocate, hold, and keep her meetings and aſſemblies: but alſo to judge of all her affairs among her members and ſubjects: theſe are the cauſe of our ſufferings. I would be moſt glad to be offered up as a ſacrifice for ſo glorious a truth; but, alas! I fear that my ſins, and the abuſe of ſo glorious things as I have found, deprive me of ſo fair a crown: Yet my lord doth know, if he would call me to it, and ſtrengthen me in it, it would be to me the moſt glorious day, and gladeſt hour I ever ſaw in my life; but I am in his hands, to do with me whatſoever ſhall please him," &c.

This eminent ſaint ſpent much of his time in the mount of prayer and wreſtling with God, was admitted to very intimate nearneſs with him, and had many ſecret things revealed to him from God. He uſed to ſay, "He wondered how a Chriſtian could lie in bed all night, without riſing to ſpend ſome of the night in prayer and praiſe."

In his laſt illneſs he had a great weakneſs in his knees, cauſed by his continual kneeling at prayer, the fleſh thereof became inſenſible, and hard like a ſort of horn; but, when in his weakneſs he was deſired to remit ſomewhat of his former painfulneſs, his anſwer was, he had his life of God, and therefore it ſhould be ſpent for him. During his ſickneſs he was ſo filled with the ſenſible enjoyment of God, that he was ſometimes overheard in prayer to have theſe words: "Lord, hold thy hand, it is enough, thy ſervant is a clay veſſel, and can hold no more."

36. Mr

36. Mr Chriſtopher Love, miniſter of Laurence-jury in London, who was beheaded on Towerhill, Aug. 22. 1651, in time of Cromwell's uſurpation, and for ſuſpected plotting againſt his government, his words on the ſcaffold were moſt pathetic and weighty: "Although (ſaid he) there be but little between me and death, yet this bears up my heart, there is little between me and heaven. It comforted Dr Taylor, the martyr, when he was going to execution, that there were but two ſtiles between him and his Father's houſe: there is a leſſer way between me and my Father's houſe, but two ſteps between me and glory. It is but lying down upon that block, and I ſhall aſcend upon a throne. I am this day ſailing towards the ocean of eternity, through a rough paſſage to my haven of reſt, through a Red ſea to the promiſed land. Methinks I hear God ſay to me, as he did to Moſes, Go up to mount Nebo, and die there: So to me, Go up to Towerhill, and die there. Iſaac ſaid of himſelf, that he was old, and yet he knew not the day of his death; but I cannot ſay ſo. I am young, and yet I know the day of my death, and I know the kind of my death, and the place of my death alſo. I am put to ſuch a kind of death, as two famous preachers of the goſpel were put to before me, John the Baptiſt, and Paul the Apoſtle, they were both beheaded. I read alſo in Rev. xx. 4. "The ſaints were beheaded for the word of God, and the teſtimony of Jeſus." But herein is the diſadvantage which I lie under in the thoughts of many; they judge that I ſuffer not for the word of God, or for conſcience, but for meddling with ſtate matters. To this I ſhall briefly ſay, that it is an old trick of Satan, to impute the cauſe of God's peoples ſufferings, to be contrivements againſt the ſtate; when, in truth, it is their religion and conſcience they are perſecuted for. The rulers of Iſrael would have put Jeremiah to death upon the civil account, though indeed it was only the truth of his prophecy that made the rulers angry with him: and yet, upon a civil account, they pretended he muſt die, becauſe he fell away to the Chaldeans, and would have brought in foreign forces to invade them. The ſame thing is laid to my charge,

of

of which I am as innocent as Jeremiah was. So Paul, though he did but preach Jeſus Chriſt, yet his enemies would have put him to death, under pretence that he was a mover of ſedition. Upon a civil account my life is pretended to be taken away; whereas, it is becauſe I purſue my covenant, and will not proſtitute my principles and conſcience to the ambition and luſt of men. I had rather die a covenant keeper, than live a covenant-breaker. Behold I am this day making a double exchange: I am changing a pulpit for a ſcaffold, and a ſcaffold for a throne: And I might add a third, I am changing the preſence of this numerous multitude on Towerhill, for the innumerable company of ſaints and angels in heaven, the holy hill of Zion; and I am changing a guard of ſoldiers for a guard of angels, which will receive me, and carry me to Abraham's boſom. This ſcaffold is the beſt pulpit that ever I preached in: In my church pulpit, God, through his grace, made me an inſtrument to bring others to heaven; but in this pulpit he will bring me to heaven." Afterwards he ſaid, "Though my blood be not the blood of nobles, yet it is Chriſtian blood, miniſter's blood; yea more, it is alſo innocent blood. I magnify the riches of God's mercy and grace toward's me, that I who was born in Wales, an obſcure country, and of obſcure parents, ſhould be ſingled out to honourable ſufferings. For the firſt fourteen years of my life, I never heard a ſermon preached; yet, in the fifteenth year of my age, it pleaſed God to convert me. Bleſſed be God, who not only made me a Chriſtian, but alſo a miniſter, judging me faithful, and putting me into the miniſtry, which is my glory. I had rather be a preacher in a pulpit, than a prince upon a throne: I had rather be an inſtrument to bring ſouls to heaven, than that all nations ſhould pay tribute to me. Formerly (ſaid he) I have been under a ſpirit of bondage; yea, ſometimes I have had more fear in drawing out a tooth, than now I have for cutting off my head. When fear was upon me, death was not near; now, when death is near to me, my fear is evaniſhed. I am comforted in this, though men kill me, they cannot damn me; though they thruſt me out of the world, yet

they cannot ſhut out of heaven. When I have ſhed my blood, I expect the full declaration of the remiſſion of ſins through the blood of Jeſus Chriſt. I am going to my long home, and ye to your ſhort homes; but I ſhall be at my home, before you be at yours." He prayed, that ſeeing "He was called to do the work which he never did, he might have the ſtrength which he never had."

Dr WILD, in his ELEGY, hath theſe lines:

"Methinks I heard beheaded ſaints above
"Call to each other, Sirs, make room for LOVE.
"Who, when he came to tread the fatal ſtage,
"(Which prov'd his glory, and his en'mies rage)
"His blood ne'er ran to's heart; Chriſt's blood was there
"Reviving it; his own was all to ſpare;
"Which, riſing in his cheeks, did ſeem to ſay,
"Is this the blood you thirſt for? Tak't, I pray.
"Spectators in his looks ſuch life did ſee,
"That they appear'd more like to die than he.
"Light'nings, which fill'd the air with blazing light,
"Did ſerve for torches at that diſmal night;
"In which, and all next day, for many hours,
"Heav'n groan'd in thunder, and did weep in ſhow'rs;
"Nor do I wonder that God thunder'd ſo,
"When BOANERGES, murder'd, lay below."

37. Mrs Joyce Lewis, being condemned to be burnt for the Proteſtant religion, in queen Mary's reign, when ſhe heard that the writ for her execution was come, ſhe ſaid to her friends, "As for death, I fear it not; for when I behold the amiable countenance of Jeſus Chriſt my dear Saviour, the ugly face of death doth not much trouble me."

38. Bullinger of Zurich, in his ſickneſs, ſaid to his friends, "If the Lord will make any farther uſe of me and my miniſtry in his church, I will willingly obey

im; but if he pleaſe (as I much deſire) to take me ut of this miſerable life, I ſhall exceedingly rejoice that e pleaſeth to take me out of this corrupt and wretched ge to go to my Saviour Chriſt. For (ſaid he) if Socrates was glad when his death approached, becauſe (as he thought) he ſhould go to Homer, Heſiod, and other learned men, whom he expected to meet with in the other world; how much more do I joy, who am ſure that I ſhall See my Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, as alſo the Saints, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apoſtles, and all the holy men who have lived from the beginning of the world? Now when I am ſure to ſee them, and to partake of their joys, why ſhould I not willingly die to enjoy their perpetual ſociety and glory?"

39. Mr Theodore Beza, a famous paſtor in Geneva, when he apprehended the approach of death, reviſed his will, and ſo, eaſing himſelf of all worldly thoughts, wholly betook himſelf to expect the time of his departure, which he had much longed for. He often uſed he Apoſtle's ſaying, "We are his workmanſhip, creat-d in Jeſus Chriſt unto good works." And that of Auuſtine, *Domine, quod cæpiſti perfice, ne in portu naufraium accidat.* "Lord perfect that which thou haſt beun, that I ſuffer not ſhipwreck in the haven." And hat ſaying of Bernard; *Domine, ſequemur te, per te, ad Te, quia veritas; Per te, quia via: Ad te, quia vita.* Lord, we will follow thee, by thee to thee. Thee, ecauſe thou art the truth; by thee, becauſe thou art e way: to thee, becauſe thou art the life."

40. Melancton of Wittemberg, (Luther's dear comanion) ſaid, "That he much longed to be diſſolved, nd that for two reaſons: *Firſt*, That he might enjoy e much deſired preſence and ſight of Chriſt, and of he heavenly church: *Secondly*, That he might be freed om the cruel and implacable diſcords of divines."

41. Mr John Bradford, a miniſter and martyr in ueen Mary's Reign, when the keeper told him that he next day he was to be burnt in Smithfield, he put off his cap, and, lifting up his eyes to heaven, ſaid, "I hank God for it, it comes not now to me on a ſudden,

but as a thing waited for every day and hour; the Lo make me worthy thereof." One Creſſwell offering interpoſe for him, and deſiring to know what his r queſt was; he ſaid, "I have no requeſt to make; the queen give me my life, I will thank her; if ſhe wi baniſh me, I will thank her; if ſhe will burn me, will thank her; if ſhe will condemn me to perpetu impriſonment, I will thank her." The chancellor pre ſing him to do as others had done, in hopes of th queen's mercy; he ſaid, "My lord, I deſire mercy wit God's mercy; that is, without doing or ſaying any thin againſt God and his truth. But mercy with God' wrath, God keep me from. God's mercy (added he I deſire, and alſo would be glad of the queen's favour to live as a ſubject without clog on conſcience; but o therwiſe, the Lord's mercy is better to me than life Life in his diſpleaſure is worſe than death, and death i his favour is true life."

In his letter to Dr Cranmer, Dr Ridley, and D Latimer, he had theſe words: "Our dear brothe Rogers hath broken the ice valiantly. This day, or to morrow at the utmoſt, hearty Hooper, ſincere Saun ders, and truſty Taylor, will end their courſe, and re ceive their crown. The next am I, who hourly loo for the porter to open me the the gates after them t enter into the deſired reſt. God forgive me my unthank fulneſs for his exceeding great mercy. Though I ſuffe juſtly (for I have been a great hypocrite, unthankfu &c. the Lord pardon me, yea, he hath done it, he hat done it indeed) yet, what evil hath he done? Chriſt whom the prelates perſecute, his truth which they hat in me, hath done no evil, nor deſerved death. O wha am I, Lord, that thou ſhouldſt thus magnify me? Is thy will to ſend for ſuch a wretched hypocrite in fiery chariot, as thou didſt ſend for Elias?"

In one of his meditations, after confeſſing of ſin, I ſaid, "O what now may we do! deſpair? No, f thou art God, and therefore good; thou art mercif and therefore thou forgiveſt ſin: With thee there mercy and propitiation, and therefore thou art worſh

ped. When Adam ſinned, thou gaveſt him mercy before he deſired it; and wilt thou deny us mercy, who now deſire the ſame? Adam excuſed his fault, and accuſed thee; but we accuſe ourſelves, and excuſe thee: and, ſhall we be ſent empty away? How often in the wilderneſs didſt thou ſpare Iſrael, and defer the plague at the requeſt of Moſes, when the people themſelves made no petition to thee, ? Now we do not only make our petition to thee, but alſo have a Mediator, far above Moſes, to appear for us, even Chriſt Jeſus thine own Son; and ſhall we, dear Lord, depart aſhamed? O merciful Lord, for thine own glory, ſuffer not the enemy of thy Son Chriſt, the Romiſh Anti-Chriſt, thus wretchedly to delude and draw from thee our poor brethren, for whom thy dear Son once died, &c. Suffer him not to ſeduce the ſimple ſort with his fond opinion, that his falſe gods, his blind, mumbling, feigned religion, or his fooliſh ſuperſtition, doth give him ſuch conqueſts, ſuch victories, and ſuch triumphs over us. But, O Lord, this is thy righteous judgement to puniſh us with the tyrannical yoke of blindneſs, becauſe we have caſt away from us the ſweet yoke of the wholeſome word of thy Son our Saviour."

In his letter to Mrs Anne Warcup, he ſaid, "My ſtaff ſtandeth at the door. I look continually for the ſheriff to come for me; and I bleſs God I am ready for him. Now I go to practiſe that which I have preached; now I am climbing up the hill; it will cauſe me puff and blow before I come to the cliff. The hill is ſteep and high, my breath is ſhort, and my ſtrength is feeble. Pray therefore to the Lord for me, that, as I have now, through his goodneſs, even almoſt come to the top, I may, by his grace, be ſtrengthened, not to reſt until I come where I ſhould be."

He was ſingular for humility and ſelf-abaſement, though a moſt eminent ſaint. He ſubſcribed ſome of his letters, The moſt miſerable, had-hearted unthankful ſinner, John Bradford. A very painted hypocrite, John Bradford. *Miſerimus peccator*, John Bradford. The ſinful John Bradford.

42. Mr Edward Deering, a little before his death, ſaid

ſaid to his friends, " As for my death, I bleſs God feel and find ſo much inward joy and comfort to my ſoul, that, if it were put to my choice whether I would die or live, I would a thouſand times rather chooſe death than life, if it may ſtand with the holy will of God."

43. Mr Robert Rollock, when a-dying, prayed, " Lord, I have hitherto ſeen but darkly in the glaſs of thy word; now grant that I may enjoy the eternal fruition of thy countenance, which I have ſo much deſired and longed for. Haſte, Lord, and do not tarry: I am weary both of nights and days: Come, Lord Jeſus, that I may come to thee. Break theſe eye-ſtrings, and give me others. I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with thee; haſte, Lord Jeſus, and defer no longer. Go forth, my weak life, and let a better ſucceed. O Lord Jeſus, thruſt thy hand into my body, and take my ſoul to thyſelf. O my ſweet Lord, ſet this ſoul of mine free, that it may enjoy her huſband."

44. Galeacius Carracciolus, marquis of Vico, when a-dying, took his leave of his wife and all his Chriſtian friends, telling them that he would lead them the way to heaven. And he cried to Jeſus Chriſt, that " as he had fought him all his life, ſo now he would receive and acknowledge him as his own."

45. The famous lord Dupleſſis in France, when a-dying, was much concerned for the church of God in diſtreſs, praying earneſtly for her deliverance. He particularly bleſſed ſuch of his grand-children as were following the ſtudies of learning, ſaying, that " he was aſſured they ſhould be bleſſed with the bleſſings both of heaven above, and of the earth beneath." When a miniſter ſpoke of the ſervice he had done the church by his writings, he ſaid, " Alas, what was there of mine in that work? Say not that it was I, but God by me." Then, lifting up his hands above his head, he cried three times, " Mercy, mercy, mercy." Adding, that he did it, to ſhow that it was alone the mercy of God to which he had recourſe. And declared, that his " faith was altogether founded upon the goodneſs of God in Jeſus Chriſt, who, by the Father, had been made unto

,"as to all others that believe in him, wiſdom, uſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption. " A- ſaid he,) away with all merit; I call for nothing rcy, free mercy :" When one was bleſſing God ing him ſuch peace and comfort at his end, he I feel, I feel what I ſpeak." As to his faith of ths of God, " He ſaid he was entirely perſuaded ; by the demonſtration of God's Holy Spirit, was more powerful, more clear, and more cer- han all the demonſtrations of Euclid." When y praying, he was overheard ſaying, in broken es, " I fly, I fly to heaven. Let the angels ne to the boſom of my Saviour." Afterwards, , " I know that my Redeemer liveth, and I ſhall n with theſe eyes, *Hiſce oculis*;" which words eated four or five times.

Jerome of Prague, when he was faſtened to the and the executioner began to kindle the fire be- im, he bade him kindle it before his face. " For e) if I had been afraid of it, I had not come to ace, having had ſo many opportunities offered eſcape it."

Mr Hooker, a miniſter in New-England, when at ſtood weeping at his bed ſide, when he lay a- ſaid to him, " Sir, you are going to receive the of all your labours;" he replied, " Brother, I ng to receive mercy."

Mr Heron, another miniſter there, when dying ving a family of many ſmall children; his poor ll a-weeping, and ſaid, alas! what will become theſe children? He preſently and pleaſantly re- " Never fear; he that feeds the young ravens ot ſtarve the young Herons." And indeed it o paſs accordingly. It was an ancient obſerva- ncerning the Engliſh martyrs under the bloody perſecution, " That none of them went more y to the ſtake than thoſe who had the greateſt s to commit unto the Lord."

Chryſoſtom, when the empreſs Eudoxa (an A- ent a threatening meſſage to him, he ſaid, " Go , *Nil niſi peccatum timeo*, I fear nothing but ſin."

When

When he was ſentenced to baniſhment, he ſaid, "None of theſe things trouble me; for I ſaid before within myſelf, if the empreſs will, let her baniſh me; the earth is the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof. If ſhe will, let her ſaw me aſunder; Iſaiah was ſo uſed: if ſhe will, let her caſt me into the ſea; I will remember Jonah. if ſhe will, let her caſt me into a burning fiery furnace, or to the wild beaſts; the three children and Daniel were ſo ſerved: if ſhe will, let her ſtone me, or cut off my head; I have St Stephen and the Baptiſt for my companions: if ſhe will, let her take away all my ſubſtance; naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked ſhall I return thither again."

But I muſt break off, for time would fail me to enumerate the many inſtances of the faith, love, patience, hope, courage, and conſtancy of the ſaints and martyrs of Jeſus, when in the view of death. Some have told the perſecutors, "That they might pull the hearts out of their bodies, but they could never pluck the truth out of their hearts." Others have ſaid, "That if every hair of their heads were men, they ſhould all ſuffer for Chriſt and his truths." "Oh (ſaid one of them) can I die but once for Chriſt?"

To conclude, let theſe examples prompt us to ſeek grace from God, and make it our earneſt ſtudy to imitate and follow ſuch a cloud of witneſſes, that we may die martyrs in reſolution, our graces may be moſt lively at the laſt, our evening ſun may ſhine brighteſt, and we may go off the ſtage glorifying God, and leaving a ſweet ſavour behind us, as theſe famous worthies, whoſe praiſe is in the churches, have done before us.

DIRECT. VII. Let Dying Perſons be much in Prayer and Ejaculations to God.

PRAYER is the native breath of renewed ſouls; it is as neceſſary to their ſpiritual life, as breath is to the natural life, Lam. iii. 59. "Hide not thine ear at my breathing." The firſt thing a child of God doth, when he is new-born, is to breathe by prayer, Acts ix. 11. "Behold

old he prayeth." And it is alſo his laſt work in rld to pray, Acts vii. 59. 60. "And they ſtoned m, calling upon God, and ſaying, Lord Jeſus, re- ny ſpirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with voice, Lord, lay not this ſin to their charge. And he had ſaid this, he fell aſleep." A dying Chriſ- th many to pray for; he is to pray for the church l, for his friends and relations, and alſo for his es, as Stephen did, of whom I ſpoke before. But lly he muſt pray for himſelf, that ſin may be for- and that he may have ſafe conduct through the alley. I have heard of ſome that have been found upon their knees: A noble poſture to die in! greeable is it, to enter praying into the land of ? So did Stephen; yea, ſo did our bleſſed Saviour f: "Father, forgive them, for they know not hey do. Father, into thy hands I commend my The laſt words that holy Uſher uttered were, , Lord, in a ſpecial manner forgive my ſins of on." "Lord, (ſaid dying Beza) perfect that which aſt begun, that I ſuffer not ſhipwreck in the ha- I remember to have read of an old miniſter, when nd death approaching, he ſaid, "I deſire to die e poor thief, crying to the crucified Jeſus for mercy. nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing, except s unworthy. My eye, and hope, and faith, is ift on his croſs. I bring an unworthineſs like f the poor dying thief unto him, and have no to plead than he. Like the poor thief crucified im, I am waiting to be received, by the infinite of my Lord, into his kingdom." Let us in like r die, crying to a crucified Jeſus for mercy, remember me, now thou art in thy kingdom.

lying Chriſtian, remember the time of prayer is n end, after death there will be no more occaſion ayer. O then beg that the ſpirit of prayer may poured down upon you at this time, that you may ibled to pour out your heart before God, both for lf and others. O how earneſtly ſhould you pray when you are taking your leave of prayer! mind ample which your Redeemer gave you; it was

before his death that he offered up prayers and ſupplication with ſtrong crying and tears unto God. I acknowledge, ſick and dying perſons are frequently out of caſe for making prayers of any great length or continuance (which conſideration ſhould excite us to the greater diligence in prayer in the time of health) and therefore they ought to be the more frequent and fervent, in ſhort and ſuitable ejaculations and petitions to God, as their exigencies do require.

Some *Meditations* and *Ejaculations*, proper for ſick and dying perſons, and eſpecially for a dying Believer.

O LORD, thou art the God of my life, and haſt the keys of death in thy hand. Thou haſt meaſured the length of my life, and appointed the hour of my death. The number of my months and days is with thee, and thou haſt appointed the bounds, over which I cannot paſs.

What is my life but a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away? at the longeſt how ſhort is it; and at the ſtrongeſt how weak! "What man is it that liveth here, and ſhall not ſee death? When a few days are come, I will go the way whence I ſhall not return." God hath decreed it, ſin hath deſerved it, my frailty demonſtrates it, death's harbinger proclaims it, and I muſt expect it.

There is no diſcharge in this war, no exemption from death's ſtroke. Death's meſſengers are come to warn me, that my laſt day and hour draweth nigh. The ſound of their Maſter's feet is behind them. This clay-houſe muſt be diſſolved, my ſoul diſlodged, and my place here ſhall know me no more; I will be quickly as water ſpilt on the ground, that cannot be gathered up again.

O that I may be ſuitably exerciſed in my preſent weak and dying condition! when my fleſh faileth and my heart fainteth within me. O that God may be the ſtrength of my heart, and portion for ever! When the keepers of the houſe do tremble, let God watch over

it, and be the keeper of my ſoul. When the grinders do ceaſe, becauſe they are few, let my ſoul be fed with manna from heaven. When the daughters of muſic are brought low, let my ſoul be diſpoſed for hearing the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb in the temple above. When thoſe that look out at the windows are darkened, let the eyes of my ſoul be enlightened to behold, with the dying martyr Stephen, the heavens opened, and the glorious Jeſus ſtanding on the right hand of God, making interceſſion for me, and ready to receive me. Let my hope and deſire look out at the windows, and ſay, "Why is his chariot ſo long a coming? and why tarry the wheels of his chariot? Make haſte, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Bether."

O that I may obſerve the afflicting hand of God in my preſent ſickneſs! Surely affliction cometh not out of the duſt, nor doth trouble ſpring out of the ground. O Lord, rebuke me not in thine indignation, nor chaſten me in thine hot diſpleaſure. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak; and heal me, for my bones are vexed. When thou with rebukes doſt correct man for iniquity, thou makeſt his beauty to conſume away like a moth: Surely every man is vanity. The ſorrows of my heart are enlarged. O bring me out of my diſtreſſes. Look upon my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my ſins. I look for ſympathy to my great High Prieſt, who is touched with the feeling of my infirmities, My help and ſtrength is in him.

O that, when I am afflicted, I may not deſpiſe the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when I am rebuked of him! Let me hear the rod, and him that hath appointed it. Let me kiſs the rod, and accept of the puniſhment of mine iniquity. O that in my affliction I may be helped to humble myſelf greatly before the God of my fathers, and make a true and penitent confeſſion of my ſins!

Oh! what ſhall I ſay to thee, O thou preſerver of men? I will ſay, Lord, be merciful to me; heal my ſoul, for I have ſinned againſt thee. I acknowledge, that, through an evil heart of unbelief, I have many a time

departed away from the living God, O how vainly and fooliſhly have I lived in the world! How laviſh of my precious time! How unmindful of my latter end! How careleſs of my immortal ſoul! How little in preparation for eternity! Oh! my own heart condemns me, my ſins teſtify againſt me; and thou, who knoweſt them better than I do myſelf, together with their ſeveral aggravations, mighteſt juſtly condemn me too. But my comfort is, that with thee the Lord there is mercy that thou mayeſt be feared, and with thy Son there is plenteous redemption: Wherefore, for his ſake he pleaſed to forgive me all my bypaſt tranſgreſſions, whether in thought, word or deed, thoſe I remember, and thoſe I have forgotten, and let them neither be charged on me to my ſhame and confuſion in this world, nor to my everlaſting ruin in that which is to come. Lord, forgive the follies of my childhood, the extravagancies of my youth, and the iniquities of my riper years.

Oh I am polluted with ſin, and dare not appear before God with my own filthy rags upon me. When Adam loſt the garment of original righteouſneſs, he fled from God, and dreaded the ſummons of offended juſtice. Now, there is no appearing before God with acceptance, but in the garment of his Son, my elder brother. None can have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt of all, but by the blood of Jeſus. O enable me to diſclaim whatſoever duties I have performed, or graces I exerciſed, and to rely on a crucified Chriſt alone for pardon and life. Though thou ſlayeſt me, let me die truſting in and cleaving to a crucified Jeſus.

Now the powers of darkneſs will ſeek to raiſe tempeſts to ſhipwreck the veſſel of my ſoul, when it would enter into the eternal haven; O that like the wiſe mariner, when the ſtorm approacheth, I may endeavour to ſecure the veſſel with the anchors of faith and hope faſtened on the rock Chriſt!

O that, when the time of combat with my laſt enemy cometh, I may above all take the ſhield of faith, whereby I may be ſheltered from the ſting of death, and may quench the fiery darts of the wicked one!

O that the Lord of hoſts, the Captain of my ſalva-

tion

tion, may be with me in my laſt conflict, and may help me to put on the whole armour of God, and give me ſkill to uſe it, that I may be able to ſtand in the evil day! Teach my hands to war, and my fingers to fight, that through thee I may do valiantly, and tread down all mine enemies. O that now I may ſo finiſh my courſe, and fight the good fight of faith, that at death I may receive the crown of righteouſneſs, which the righteous Judge will give to all that love his appearing. O that my faith may ripen into a full aſſurance, that I may go off the ſtage with joy, and an abundant entrance may be adminiſtered unto me into the kingdom of my Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

O that the night of my death may ſhine bright with the ſparkling ſtars of heavenly grace! Lord, increaſe my faith? Let the pilgrim's ſtaff of faith be never out of my hand, till I come to my journey's end. O let me get Chriſt all in my arms, like old Simeon before his death, that I may ſay like him, "Now let thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation." Kindle the fire of heavenly love in my ſoul, and give me a taſte of heavenly joys. O for one beam of thy light, to baniſh away all my doubts and fears! Lord, let in ſomething of heaven to my ſoul, before itſelf go into heaven.

Lord, take me not out of this life till thou haſt fitted me for a better. May I be fitted for heaven before I leave the earth, and finiſh my work before I finiſh my courſe! Make me ready to meet thee at thy coming, that ſo thy coming may not be the matter of my terror, but the matter of my hope, deſires, and joyful expectations. O that I may be in a longing frame for that bleſſed time, when he will come and put a period to all my ſins, ſorrows, troubles, and temptations here, and when I ſhall exchange my preſent being in the body, for an everlaſting being with the Lord! Lord, ſtrengthen my faith and hope, that ſo neither the ſweetneſs of life, the pain of death, nor apprehenſions about my future ſtate, may make me unwilling to die. Is my Redeemer aſcended and gone before to prepare a place for me; why

why then ſhould I be ſlothful to go in and poſſeſs the good land!

Mercy hath filled up all my life, and brought me near to the end of it; O let it not leave me now, when all the enjoyments of the world are as nothing to me; and I am to take an everlaſting farewell of them all. Now one ſmile of thy face, one taſte of thy love, would be ſtrength and joy to my departing ſoul. O remember the word to thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope; haſt thou not ſaid "I will never leave thee nor forſake thee?" O fulfil this word to me in the time of my need. O let me never go off the ſtage with a heavy heart or a guilty conſcience; but may I depart in peace and ſleep in Jeſus. Let me breathe out my departing ſoul to thee, and truſt it in thy hand and ſafe keeping: And let my fleſh reſt in hopes of riſing glorioufly at the laſt day, through him who is the reſurrection and the life, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Love and praiſe is the exerciſe of ſaints for ever; may I be accquainted with it here! O ſhall I not love and praiſe him who hath forgiven all mine iniquities, healed all my diſeaſes, redeemed my life from deſtruction, and crowned me with loving kindneſs and tender mercies? He hath cauſed goodneſs and mercy follow me all the days of my life; and ſhall I not follow him with praiſes at the end of it?

Now the time of my departure is at hand, and the lamp of my life is ready to be extinguiſhed. O that I may die in faith, that whether the lamp go out of its own accord, or by ſome ſudden blaſt, it may be lighted again by the immortal beams of the Sun of righteouſneſs! And though I be overtaken with the ſleep of death, and lie down in the bed of the grave; yet I ſhall awake again in the morning of the reſurrection, that morning which ſhall never be ſucceeded by an evening; when I ſhall behold thy face in righteouſneſs, and be eternally ſatisfied with thy likeneſs.

Now I am going the way of all the earth, ready to launch forth into eternity, where I ſhall be fixed in my everlaſting condition. Grant me, Lord, the perfect

feſt uſe of my ſenſes, of my reaſon and underſtanding, that I may glorify thy name, and edify my neighbours to the laſt moment of my departure. And now, when I am to conflict with the king of terrors, O ſupport and aſſiſt me in my foreſt extremities and laſt agonies! O mercifully mitigate death's pangs, and let my paſſage be eaſy, and my landing ſafe. Stand by me in my dying moments, and ſecure my ſoul in thy hands from all its deadly enemies. And, when I am numbered among the dead, let me alſo be numbered among the redeemed and bleſſed of the Lord for ever.

O Lord, thou determineſt both the bounds of man's life, and the bounds of his habitation. If a hair of my head cannot fall to the ground without thy providence, far leſs can my whole body fall into the grave without it. Thou haſt told me plainly that I muſt die, but mercifully haſt thou concealed the time, place, and manner, that I may always ſtand upon my guard, every hour expect thy coming, and have my accounts in my hand, and always prepared to give them up to thee my Judge. Juſtly mighteſt thou have ſnatched me away by a ſurpriſing call and ſudden ſtroke: but in thy goodneſs thou gaveſt me warning, and time to ſet my houſe and ſoul in order. O graciouſly finiſh what is now wanting of the work of grace in my heart and ſoul, and thoroughly accompliſh and furniſh me to appear in thy bleſſed preſence. May I now die to ſin every hour, that I may not die for ſin hereafter. Cauſe ſin wholly to die before me, that it may not riſe in judgment againſt me after death.

O God, be thou my refuge and ſtrength, and a very preſent help in trouble; and then I will not fear though the waters of affliction rage and be troubled, and though all the mountains of earthly comforts ſhake with the ſwelling thereof. There is a river, the ſtreams whereof ſhall make glad the city of God. O let my ſoul dwell beſide theſe living ſtreams, and drink of them for ever. In the valley of the ſhadow of death, Lord, be thou preſent as the good ſhepherd with thy guiding rod and ſupporting ſtaff; and make my departure eaſy, and full of peace and hope. Lord, carry me ſafe thro' the

... which I am entering, and let m
... door opened into the everlaſt
... the Lord. Lord Jeſus receiv
... preſented juſtified and ſpotleſ
... may come to the ſpirits of juſ
... and join with them in ſinging
... Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain
... us to God by his blood, to re
... glory, and bleſſing for ever.—

... MEDITATIONS

... BELIEVERS, WHEN DEATH IS NEAR.

... RS who have met with many ſtorms
... in their journeys, rejoice whe
... their own country; and ſhall not
... grim, that have been long wanderin
... be glad when I come near my bleſſe
... friends, and eternal habitation?
... heerfulneſs do ſome women endure th
... bearing, being ſupported with the hop
... born in the world? And what is th
... and being brought into this ſinful a
... to the joy of a ſanctified ſoul's bein
... it into heaven for ever? It is pleaſa
... winter goeth over, the meſſengers of th
... of birds doth come: and ſhall n
... ickneſs and forerunners of death
... winter of my darkneſs and trouble
... ummer of my eternal light and joy is

... death be the king of terrors? Is n
... King of comforts? Have not I m
... bleſſed King; and why ſhould I fe
... e other? O let my ſtrength and ſu

poſt at this time come from Chriſt my covenanted Redeemer.

O Lord deliver my ſoul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling! O bring me out of the miry clay, ſet my feet upon a rock, and eſtabliſh my goings, and put a new ſong in my mouth, even praiſes to our God!

If Jacob went down ſo cheerfully into Egypt, when God had ſaid unto him, "Fear not to go down, for I will go down with thee, and I will bring thee up again:" Why ſhould a believer fear to go down to the grave, when God hath undertaken to go down with him thither, and to bring him up again? His body may be turned into duſt, but God is in covenant with his duſt, and will not ſuffer the leaſt particle of it to be loſt.

Are not the righteous taken away from the evil to come? Do they not reſt on their beds, and enter into peace? Why then ſhould I grudge at dying? When the Lord is to bring heavy wrath and judgments on a land, he frequently houſes many of his people in heaven before-hand: and how happy are thoſe that get into the houſe before the ſweeping hail-ſhower doth fall. A believer needeth not to look for any ſettled fair weather in this world: It will be nothing but one ſhower up, and another down, till he be houſed in heaven. O why then ſhould I linger in this wilderneſs!

How highly dignified is the believer, in being made an heir of God, and a joint heir with his own Son Jeſus Chriſt! So that Chriſt and the believer do, as it were, divide heaven between them; they have the ſame Father, dwell in the ſame houſe, ſit at the ſame table, reign on the ſame throne, and partake of the ſame glory. O what honour is this, which is put upon a worm of the earth! It is indeed but little that the young heir enjoys of the inheritance while in this world; no more than will ſerve to bear his charges to heaven, where he ſhall get all, forget his preſent ſtraits, and remember his poverty no more. O why then ſhould not I, like a young heir, be looking and longing for the expiring of my minority, when I ſhall arrive at ripe age, and enter

upon the full poſſeſſion of the inheritance! O tha could ſend out faith and hope, thoſe two faithful ſpi to ſurvey the promiſed land, or at leaſt to viſit the b ders of my elder brother's country! What an enco raging report would they bring back! My glorio Lord is gone; he hath left the earth, and entered in his glory; my brethren and friends have many of the arrived there alſo. How great is the difference betwe my ſtate and theirs! I am groaning out my complain but they are ſinging God's praiſe. I am in darkne and cannot ſee God: But they are in light, and ſee hi face to face. O my Lord, I ſhall ſtay behind, wh they are gone? Should I be ſatisfied to wander in t wilderneſs, Far diſtant from my Father and my Go when they are triumphing above, dividing the ſpoi No: I will ſtill look after them with a ſtedfaſt eye, a cry, O Lord, how long? I will wait now in hope, ye rejoice in the forethoughts of the day, when my min rity ſhall be expired, my pilgrimage finiſhed, my baniſ ment over, that I may get home to my country a ſriends above.

What though my days be dark and gloomy now, a winter be ſharp and ſtormy? Why, it is but ſhort, an near over; the eternal ſummer approacheth! The lon day, the high ſun, and the fair garden of my well-b loved, above theſe viſible heavens, will quickly mak amends for all. Let me get up by faith and viſit th new land, view the fair city, and behold the white throne and the Lamb that ſits thereon, that I may rejoice i hope of the glory of God.

Shall many heirs of the wrath go ſinging and re joicing to hell; and will an heir of God go droopin and ſorrowing to heaven? Oh let not my bad be haviour on a death-bed, bring up a bad report upo Chriſt's good way, and the land which he hath pur chaſed.

Have I ſuch great and precious promiſes left me, an ſhall I not live and feed upon them in the time of m need? ſhall I not truſt the word of him that is faithfu and true? hath he not ſaid to me, "When thou paſſe through the waters, I will be with thee; and throug th

the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: when thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt; neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee!' When thy diſciples were ſore toſſed with winds and waves, thou cameſt to them in the fourth watch of the night, walking on the waters; and when their fears were increaſed, thou ſaideſt, "It is I, be not afraid." Thou rebukedſt the wind, and there preſently followed a great calm. My Redeemer's compaſſion continues; his bowls are not ſhut up this day, more than in the days of his fleſh. "Jeſus Chriſt is the ſame to day, yeſterday and for ever."

Ah! I have too little improven my acquaintanc with precious Chriſt in the day of my life! How ready am I to miſken and miſtake him, when he changeth his diſpenſations towards me! though I have been long at Chriſt's ſchool, what ſmall proficiency have I made in the work and myſtery of faith? how little have I learned to believe in the dark, and to drop an anchor at midnight upon the Rock of ages, and to look out for the dawning of the day?

Surely the day ſhall break, and the ſhadows flee away: my king cometh, my well beloved is on his way; he hath ſent his letter before him to warn me of it, ſaying, "Behold, I come quickly." O that, like the cold and wearied night-watch, I may be looking out for the appearing of the morning ſtar, and the breaking of the eaſtern ſky; and may be ſtill crying, "Even ſo, come Lord Jeſus, come quickly."

Thou haſt ſaid, "Light is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for all the upright in heart. Surely God's ſeed ſhall not lie always beneath the clods; the time is at hand, when it ſhall ſpring; and joyful will the crop be at laſt. O that like David in affliction, I could encourage myſelf in the Lord my God, and ſay, "The Lord liveth, bleſſed be my rock!" Why ſhould I droop, while my Lord liveth and my rock ſtandeth? My hopes may die, my comforts die, my gifts die, my riches die, my relations die, and my body die; but, good news! "The Lord liveth, bleſſed be my rock." The diſciples had a melancholy time while Chriſt was dead and lying in the grave; but that ſad time is over, he is now riſen

and will die no more. Nay, he hath proclaimed it for my comfort ſaying, "Fear not, I am the firſt and the laſt. I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death."

When my ſoul is caſt down within me, let me remember God from the land of Jordan, and the hill Mizar; that I may reaſon myſelf out of all my fears and diſcouragements: For yet "the Lord will command his loving kindneſs in the day-time, and in night his ſong ſhall be with me, and my prayer to the God of my life."

"Why then art thou caſt down, O my ſoul, and why art thou diſquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God"

Now, when death is at hand, let not my Saviour be far off. He who remembered the dying thief, and ſpoke comfortably to him, let him now remember me when he is ſeated in his kingdom, and ſay to my ſoul, "This day thou ſhalt be with me in Paradiſe." When it is abſent from the body, let it be preſent with the Lord. Let the angels now be ready to do their office, to carry my departing ſoul into Abraham's boſom. Let me now depart, that I may be with Chriſt; yea, be for ever with the Lord, that I may ſee his face. Let me dwell there, where they have no night, need no candle, no light of the ſun for ever; where God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow nor crying.

Father, into thy hands I commit my ſpirit. By the hands of him who hath redeemed it, let it be preſented to thee without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing.

An addition of ſome further *Meditations* proper for a ſick perſon in the view of Death.

THE Lord is pleaſed ſometimes to caſt men down on beds of ſickneſs, and draw the curtain between the world and them, that they may take a view of their paſt

aſt life and future ſtate. Now is it time for me to look
no my ſoul, and examine my ſtate, Oh, how many do
iſs ſalvation when they think themſelves ſure of it?
hey miſtake a form of godlineſs for the power of it,
nd thereby deceive themſelves, thinking themſelves
omething when they are nothing.

Some come the length as to ſhed tears, as Eſau did;
rofeſs fair, yea fight for the Lord, as Saul and Jehu
id; wiſh for the end of the righteous, as Balaam did;
eſire God's people to pray for them, as Pharaoh and
imon Magus did; walk ſoftly, and mourn for fear of
udgment, as Ahab did; joy in goſpel-ordinances, and
eform in many things as Herod did; prophecy and
peak well of Chriſt, as Caiphas and Judas did; be con-
inced and tremble at hearing a ſermon, as Felix did;
ea, taſte the good word of God, and the powers of the
world to come, as apoſtates have done: And yet for all
theſe attainments, remain ſtrangers to the ſaving work
of the Spirit on the heart.

O that the conſideration of hypocrites attainments
might alarm me out of my ſecurity, and make me reſt-
leſs till I find the diſtinguiſhing marks of true grace and
ſincere faith in my ſoul? O that I could ſay, there is a
rinciple in me that will not ſuffer me to build on any
oundation in the world but Chriſt and his righteouſ-
eſs; that makes me content with Chriſt, with all his
ffices, with all his precepts, and with his very croſs for
is ſake! Doth the love of Chriſt keep me back from
n, more than the law or fear of hell? Have I aimed
t God's honour in all my actions, civil, natural, and
eligious? Am I humble, and denied to my own will,
it, credit, eaſe and honour, and to all the enjoyments
f the world? Am I acquaint with the throne of grace,
nd deſirous to keep up a conſtant correſpondence with
? O let me not reſt till I perceive thoſe things in my
ul which accompany ſalvation.

O how comfortable would it be to me now, if I could
y with good Hezekiah in his ſickneſs, "Remember
ow, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth,
nd with a perfect heart, and have done that which is
ood in thy ſight? O that I could pray, and ſay with
Jeſus

Jeſus my Saviour when in the view of death, "Fath I have glorified thee on earth; I have finiſhed the wo which thou gaveſt me to do: and now, O Father, gl riſy thou me with thine own ſelf, with the glory whi thou haſt ordained for me before the world was!"

Alas, Lord, I muſt confeſs, my iniquities have gon up above mine head; my miſpent time, my unfrui fulneſs under the means of grace, and waterings of o dinances, may cauſe me to cry out, Wo is me for th leanneſs of my ſoul, and barrenneſs of my heart! have been an empty vine, bringing forth fruit only t myſelf. I have hid my Lord's money, and therefo deſerve the doom of the wicked and ſlothful ſervan But my relief is in my Surety's righteouſneſs. Bleſſe be the Lord, who hath ſent his Son to bleſs thoſe wh by nature lie under the curſe, and to intercede for tho who cannot ſpeak for themſelves. O how ſuitable is h to my ſoul's caſe! I have indeed a multitude of ſin but he hath a multitude of tender mercies; I have dee and heinous guilt, but he hath a deep fountain for waſh ing it out; I am ſold under ſin, but he hath a ranſom to buy me back again; my ſore is broad, but his plaiſte is anſwerable; my wound is great, but his balm is ex cellent. Surely it is my wiſdom to go to Chriſt wit all my grievances, and always to lie and cry at my Re deemer's door.

O that now, when the ſun of my life is ſetting, th bleſſed ſun of righteouſneſs may ariſe and ſhine upo my ſoul! Goodneſs and mercy hath followed me whil lived: O that Chriſt and glory may meet me when die! I muſt acknowledge thy goodneſs; were this th laſt hour I had to live, and this the laſt word I had t ſpeak in the world, I behoved to ſay, Lord, thou ha been a merciful and gracious God to me, my whol life hath been a continued tract of mercy; Lord, crow the end of it with mercy alſo. Surely the ſea is not ſ full of water, nor the ſun ſo full of light, as thou ar full of grace and mercy. O let not my ſins ſtop th current of thy tender mercies at this time. Lord drown all my ſins in the ſea of Chriſt's blood, that my ſoul may not be ſunk by them in the ocean of Divin wrath

wrath. Lord Jeſus, embrace my periſhing ſoul in thy arms: let thycroſs be my ſecurity, and thy wounds my refuge.

O thou that heareſt the young ravens which cry, be not ſilent to me at this time, leſt, if thou be ſilent to me, I be like them that go down to the pit.

Lord, I am now called to the work I never did: give me the ſtrength I never had. Surely it is an important matter to die, and my eternal ſtate dependeth upon dying aright. What I do amiſs in my life one day, I may amend it in the next; but not ſo here, I can die but once: if I mar this piece of work, I cannot come back to mend it again; if I forget any thing neceſſary for my journey, I cannot return to fetch it. Oh, a wrong ſtep in going out of this life is highly dangerous. In one reſpect, it is like the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and can never be forgiven: For I cannot come back to mourn for it. Of all the buſineſs I ever undertook, I have moſt need to take care of my dying.

Oh, is death coming to take down this earthly tabernacle, and to put the one-half of me in the dark grave, and the other half of me in heaven or in hell; and ſhall I give ſleep to mine eyes, or ſlumber to mine eyes-lids, till I find myſelf in that caſe, that I dare look death in the face, and dare hazard my ſoul upon eternity?

O to have right impreſſions of the certainty of death and the uncertainty of life! What is my life but a vapour, a ſand-glaſs of ſixty or ſeventy years, which will ſoon run out? eternity and a judgment-ſeat are now hard upon me. The blaſt of the laſt trumpet is at hand. There will ſhortly be a proclamation by one, (ſtanding in the clouds,) that time ſhall be no more. The world looks big in men's eyes in time of health; but when the eye-ſtrings break, the breath turns cold, and the impriſoned ſoul looks out at the window of the clay houſe, ready to leap out into eternity, can the world give any ſatisfaction? No, no; a lamp full of oil will be valued then more than a houſe full of gold, The fineſt things on earth will then appear nothing but

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a piece of painted duſt and gilded clay. How would the greateſt worlding, then, give all his gol ſilver, riches and honours, for one ſight of Chriſt face, one ſmile of his countenance? O wherefore men in health neglect the market of grace, and the pearl of great price? why ſhould they ſpend money for that which is not bread, and their labo that which ſatisfieth not?

Lord, ſave me from the hypocrite's caſe at d whoſe candle of profeſſion and of hope burns ſta ces fair all the way with him, but goeth out in the trance of death; and there he ſtumbles and falls, ſhall riſe no more.... O that my profeſſion and hope be of God's creating! If God light my candle, ſhall my feet be enlightened through the dark n and neither death nor hell ſhall be able to put it o

Lord, ſubdue ſin in me, and let it be certain dying now, that it may certainly be dead before God forbid that my ſins ſhould ſurvive me!

Oh, that when the ſtroke of death diſſolves my t my ſoul may eſcape as a bird out of the ſnare o fowler, and may aſcend to the heavenly regions to joy God himſelf.

O let me look through the gates of mortality, long for the jailor's coming to ſet me at liberty. help me to overcome the love of life, and fears of d If my neighbour lend me any thing, I pay it with thanks, and ſhall I not reſtore my life to with thanks, who hath been pleaſed to lend me long? ariſe, and let me depart, for this is not my Heaven is my home, Lord bring me to it; the joy it are too great to enter into me, O make me ent ter into them.

While I lie on a ſick bed, Lord help me to pati in my ſickneſs without murmuring.

How willingly would the damned in hell endur pains a thouſand years, if they had any hopes of b ſaved at leaſt! Bleſſed be God that my ſickneſs is in hell, that my pains are not eternal.

O that I may look on my affliction as coming the hand of him that is the Lord of health and of neſs, of life and of death; who killeth and m

alive, bringeth down to the grave, and raiſeth up again! That Sovereign and wiſe Lord hath determined the time when my affliction ſhall end, as well as the time when it began. Thirty-eight years were appointed the ſick man at Batheſda pool; eighteen years the woman that Satan kept bound; twelve years to the woman with the bloody iſſue; ten days tribulation to thoſe of Smyrna; three days plague to David. The number of the godly man's tears is regiſtrated in God's book; yea, the hairs of his head are numbered.

When David got his choice of his own chaſtiſements, he choſe rather to be corrected by the hand of God, than by any other means, ſaying, "Let me fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great." I was dumb and opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it. Glory to God, that I am fallen into his merciful hand. Hath God appointed that man's coming into the world ſhall be attended with pain and crying, and his going out of it with grief and trouble; and ſhall I quarrel at it? No, I deſire humbly to underly the correction of mine iniquity, and to bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him. O that the ſickneſs of my body may be a means of health to my ſoul! May I be chaſtened of the Lord, ſo that I may not be condemned with the world!

It is good for the believer that he is afflicted. Why? it ſprings from Divine love, and it works for his ſoul's good. Affliction is a ſeal of his adoption, and no ſign of reprobation. The pureſt gold is moſt often tried, the ſweeteſt grape is hardeſt preſſed, and the trueſt Chriſtian is heavieſt croſſed. But O how ſoon will the Chriſtian forget all his groans when he comes to heaven! As ſoon as Stephen ſaw Chriſt, though at a diſtance, he forgot all his wounds and bruiſes; he minded no more the terror of the ſtones about his ears, but ſweetly yielded his ſoul into his Redeemer's hands.

I read of many in the goſpel, that by ſickneſſes and diſeaſes were driven unto Chriſt, who, if they had enjoyed health and proſperity, would have neglected, like many others, to come to him. O bleſſed is that croſs, that draweth a ſinner to Chriſt, to lay open his own

miſery, and implore Chriſt's mercy. And bleſſed that Chriſt, who never refuſeth the ſinner that come to him, though driven by affliction and miſery. T whom ſhall ſuch a diſtreſſed creature as I go, but to hi who is the only phyſician, that can both cure my ſo from ſin, and my body from ſickneſs?

Lord, thou never denied thy mercy to any ſinn that aſked it with a penitent heart. There were man ſorts of ſick ſinners that came to thee in the days thy fleſh; the blind, the deaf, the lame, the leper thoſe that were ſick of palſies, dropſies, fevers, fluxe and were poſſeſſed with devils: And yet never one c them came crying for mercy, that went away witho his errand, were his ſin never ſo great, his diſeaſe nev ſo grievous. Nay, ſo merciful is my Redeemer, th he offered and gave his mercy to many that never aſke it, being moved with the bowels of his own compaſſio and the ſight of their miſery; ſo dealt he with the w man of Samaria, the widow of Nain, and the man th lay thirty-eight years at the pool of Bethesda. Oh, he gave his mercy ſo willingly to them that did not a it, and was found of them that ſought him not, will I deny mercy to my ſoul that is crying for it.

There is but a ſtep between me and death; Lor ſeal my pardon to me, before I go hence and be n more. O draw nigh to me, and ſave me: for my ſo is full of trouble, and my life draweth nigh unto th grave. Thy loving-kindneſs is better than life; O mak me ſure of that, and I will willingly part with this mo tal life.

O thou who willeſt not that any ſhould periſh, b that all ſhould come to repentance; be pleaſed to mak uſe of the chaſtiſement of my body, as a medicine t cure my ſoul, and bring me to a true and ſincere re pentance. One day is with thee as a thouſand years O work in me in this, which may be my laſt day, wha ſoever thou ſeeſt wanting in me. Enable me to preſen unto thee the ſacrifice of a broken and contrite hear which thou haſt promiſed not to deſpiſe. Give a tru and lively faith in the bleſſed Jeſus, who is the propi tiation for our ſins. He was wounded for our tranſ greſſions

greſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities, the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him; O heal me by his ſtripes. Let the cry of his blood drown the clamour of my ſins. I am indeed a child of wrath, but Chriſt is the Son of thy love; O pity me for his ſake, and let my ſoul find ſanctuary in his wounds.

O Lord, the waters of affliction are come in even unto my ſoul; O let the Spirit of God move on thoſe waters, that, like the pool of Bethesda, they may cure whatever ſpiritual diſeaſes thou ſeeſt in me. O Lord, conſider my affliction, accept my tears, aſſuage my pain, increaſe my patience, and finiſh my troubles. Correct me with the chaſtiſement of a Father, and not with the wounds of an enemy, and though thou take not off thy rod, Lord take away thine anger.

Lord, the prince of this world cometh, O let him have nothing in me; but, as he accuſeth, do thou abſolve. I have nothing to ſay for myſelf, but be thou my advocate, Lord; and do thou anſwer for me. I am clothed with filthy garments, and Satan ſtands at my right hand to reſiſt me; O Lord rebuke him, and pluck me as a brand out of the fire. Cauſe mine iniquities to paſs from me, and clothe me with the righteouſneſs of thy dear Son. I know, O Lord, that no unclean thing can enter into thy kingdom, and thou ſeeſt I am nothing but pollution; yea, my very righteouſneſs is filthy rags: O waſh me, and make me white in the blood of the Lamb, that I may be fit to ſtand before thy throne. O take me from the tents of Kedar to the manſions of light and purity. When my earthly houſe of this tabernacle is diſſolved, O let me have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. O bring my ſoul out of priſon, that I may eternally give thanks unto thy name. AMEN.

CHAP. VIII.

Containing Directions to the Friends and Neighbours of t Sick, who are themſelves in health for the time.

WHEN the Lord ſends ſickneſs and affliction our neighbours, we ought not to be idle a unconcerned ſpectators of his diſpenſations; but ſhould hearken to the voice of God's rod upon othe and conſider what it is that the Lord is calling for at o hands. Theſe following Directions may be uſeful thoſe that are in health.

DIRECT. I. Be very thankful to God for the gr mercy of health and ſtrength, and improve it his glory.

SURELY an healthful perſon hath ſtill great ca to be a thankful perſon. Health is a mercy that do ſeaſon and ſweeten every other temporal mercy; wit out it the greateſt wealth and honours, nay, a kin crown, can give no ſatisfaction. It is far more eligib to be a healthy beggar than a ſickly king. What co fort could it afford us, under toſſing ſickneſs and tort ing pains, to have the greateſt heaps of money to lo to, or thouſands coming to pay us homage; alas, for o unthankfulneſs to him who is the God of our healt How little do we prize his goodneſs, in continuing wi us ſuch a long tract of health and ſtrength, togeth with the uſe of our reaſon and ſenſes, when many othe are deprived of them. Surely God were righteou ſhould he teach us to value the worth of thoſe merci by the want of them.

Let us conſider how many miſerable perſons the are in the world, and who it is that maketh us to diff from them; how many diſeaſed, diſtracted, deforme lame, blind, deaf, and dumb people there are; and ho ea

ſay it had been for God to have put us in their condition, and them in ours. The difference is not owing to any thing in us: their ſins are not greater than ours. Had we a due ſenſe of our ſins and ill-deſervings, we would acknowledge ourſelves unworthy of the leaſt of all God's mercies; we would reckon every common mercy a ſpecial bleſſing, and an unmerited favour to us. ——Again, let us take a view of the fainting ſickneſs, racking pains and reſtleſs nights of others. Let us look upon our ſick friends ſweating and burning under fevers, let us hear them groaning and moaning under ſtrong pain. "Their ſoul abhors all manner of meat, and they draw near unto the gates of death." Sometimes we ſee them panting and fainting, and not able to ſpeak a word to us. And, what is the language of all this to us? is it not, that we ſhould thankfully adore our gracious God, and bleſs and magnify him, for his diſtinguiſhing goodneſs to us? O how much are we bound to the Lord, that it is not ſo with us as with others! While weariſome nights are appointed to them, and their bones are full of toſſing; all the comforts of this life are taſteleſs to them, their friends are weeping about them, but cannot help them; "it is far otherwiſe with me (may you ſay) my mercies and relations are comfortable and helpful to me, I reliſh my food, my bed gives me eaſe, my ſleep is refreſhing; I have freedom to read and pray, meditate and attend the public ordinances. "Praiſe the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me bleſs his holy name." Forget not this benefit of health, that is the chief of all my outward bleſſings. Some would part with all their worldly wealth, to have ſo much bodily health as I have. Long have I undervalued and abuſed this choice mercy of health: O that I could mourn for my neglect, and reſolve in God's ſtrength to improve my remaining health, for the praiſe and ſervice of that merciful God who is the author and preſerver of it! let me ſpend and be ſpent for God, that gives me all my health and ſtrength for his glory. Let me abhor the ingratitude of thoſe who employ the health which God giveth in the ſervice of his enemies; and make a ſacrifice of it to the devil, the world

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and the fleſh. O what prodigious folly are thoſe guilty of, who, for ſatisfying their ſenſual appetite, do often deprive themſelves of health, which is in itſelf a thouſand times of more value than all their brutiſh pleaſures! God help me to prize this mercy, that can never be prized enough."

DIRECT. II. Make conſcience of viſiting your ſick Friends and Neighbours, believing that it is your duty and intereſt to do it.

VISITING of the ſick is not only the duty of the miniſters of Chriſt, but likewiſe of all the members of Chriſt: for we are all injoined to remember them that are in adverſity, and to ſympathize with the afflicted, as being ourſelves alſo in the body. "To him that is afflicted, pity ſhould be ſhown by his friends," ſaid Job. And our Lord gives it as a character of thoſe whom he will own and acquit at the great day, Mat. xxv. 36. "I was ſick, and ye viſited me." This is the way to be like him, who is the Father of mercies, and whoſe "ſoul was grieved for the miſeries of Iſrael," Judg. x 16. We read how tenderly David ſympathized with his enemies when they were ſick, Pſal. xxxv. 13, 14. and much more ought we to viſit and ſympathize with our ſick friends. To viſit the proſperous and healthy, is an act of curioſity and civility, but to viſit the afflicted and ſickly, is an act of charity and Chriſtianity.

And as it is your duty, ſo it is your intereſt and advantage, to viſit the ſick, The wiſe man tells you, Eccl. vii. 2. "It is better to go to the houſe of mourning, than to the houſe of feaſting." King Joaſh went to ſee Eliſha in his ſickneſs, and wept over him: and he loſt nothing by ſo doing. 2 Kings xiii. 14. for he obtained thereby three famous victories over the Syrians. Though it be not warrantable to enquire at the dead, Deut. xviii. 11. yet we may learn many wholeſome leſſons from the dying, and even though they be ſpeechleſs. As for inſtance, we may hereby be inſtructed how to

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rize health, mind our own frailty, and provide for the time of ſickneſs. When we behold their ſtrength languiſhing, their tongue faltering, their eyes failing, their countenance pale; we ſhould think with ourſelves, "This will be my caſe ere long; the next arrow that death ſhoots, may be levelled at me: how much is it my concern to prepare for it!" alſo we may think, what a bitter thing ſin is, that it is the cauſe of all thoſe pains and diſtreſſes; and how mad they are who love ſin and take pleaſure in it. We may ſee likewiſe the great folly of courting and truſting the world, which leaves the ſick and dying man in the midſt of his greateſt extremity. And we may obſerve, how happy the man is that hath an intereſt in Chriſt, the peace of a good conſcience, and a well-grounded hope of heaven, to yield ſupport and confidence to him under his ſtrugglings with ſickneſs and death. When we hear the dying man's complaints of his ſins, and his lamenting his neglect of duty, and miſpending of precious time, we may learn repentance and reformation. When we obſerve their profeſſions of love to Chriſt, and their hope in him to the laſt, it doth contribute to the quickening and ſtrengthening of our faith. A right ſight of dying perſons, is a good mean to increaſe the ſpirit of grace and ſupplication in us. We may fitly allude here to the anſwer which Elijah gave to Eliſha, when he ſought a double portion of his Spirit, 2 Kings ii. 10. "If thou ſeeſt me when I am taken from thee, it ſhall be ſo unto the." A double portion of the Spirit ſhall be the allowance of thoſe who make conſcience of this duty.

DIRECT. III. Let the Friends of the Sick, and thoſe who viſit them, deal faithfully with them about their Souls.

CONSIDER this may be the laſt opportunity you may have of doing any thing for your friend's ſoul. If he die, he is fixed in his everlaſting ſtate, ſo that all advices and counſels then will be fruitleſs. It is now, or never, you muſt exert yourſelf for your friend's advantage;

vantage; there is no knowledge nor wiſdom in the grave, to which he is going, "God's loving kindneſs cannot be declared in the grave, nor his faithfulneſs in deſtruction," Pſal. lxxxviii. 11. Now is the proper time for doing good to your neighbour's ſoul. When affliction opens the ear to diſcipline, be careful to drop in wholeſome inſtructions into it; and when the heart is made tender by ſickneſs, it is a fit ſeaſon for good counſel to make impreſſions on it. Let the opportunity then be improven with faithfulneſs and prudence. And, in order thereto, obſerve the following advices.

I. Labour to know the ſick man's ſpiritual condition, that your applications may be ſuitable thereunto. The knowledge of the diſeaſe is previouſly requiſite unto the cure; as the miſtake of a phyſician about a man's diſeaſe may be as dangerous as the diſeaſe itſelf, ſo here it is highly dangerous to miſtake the caſe of the ſick man's ſoul; for then lenitives may be applied, when corroſives are needful; promiſes may be adminiſtered, when threatenings are more proper.

II. Beware of flattering the ſick with vain hopes of life, when he is more likely to die; leſt he be thereby tempted to delay or ſlacken his preparation for another world. It is fit that plainneſs be uſed with reſpect to his dangers, that he may be quickened to his work.

III. The ſick perſon is to be admoniſhed and told, that ſickneſs comes not by chance, nor by ſecond cauſes merely; but by the wiſe direction and ſpecial providence of God; that ſometimes God ſmites out of diſpleaſure for ſin, and for the ſinner's correction and amendment; and ſometimes for the trial and exerciſe of his people's graces; that the ſharpeſt afflictions ſhall work together for good to them that love God, and are rightly exerciſed under God's hand; that it is a great mercy to a ſinner, when God by his rod gives him warning and ſpace to repent, and flee to the blood of ſprinkling, and to cry to God for pardon, and doth not ſnatch him out of the world, by a ſudden death. Upon which account the voice of the rod ſhould be carefully hearkened to and thankfully obeyed.

IV. If the ſick perſon be ignorant, he is to be catechiſed

chiſed and inſtructed in the principles of religion, eſpecially concerning his faith and repentance, and his uptaking of the covenant of grace, and the method of pardon and ſalvation through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt apprehended by faith. And it may be proper to demand his aſſent to ſome of the fundamental truths of Chriſtianity, or his anſwer to ſuch queſtions as theſe: *Firſt*, Do you believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, one God in three perſons, the Maker and Governor of the world? 2. Do you believe that Jeſus Chriſt, who aſſumed our nature, obeyed the law, died on the croſs, roſe from the dead, and aſcended to heaven, is the eternal Son of God, and the only Saviour of ſinners? 3. Are you ſenſible that you are a loſt ſinner by Adam's fall, and, beſides that, guilty of innumerable actual ſins; and that you have broken God's holy commandments in thoughts, words and deeds, and, for ſo doing, do deſerve God's wrath both in this life and that which is to come? 4. Are you truly grieved and ſorry for breaking God's law, neglecting his worſhip, miſpending your time, and purſuing the vanities of the world? And would you do as you have done, or live otherwiſe if you were to begin your life again? 5. How do you think to get your guilt removed, your ſins pardoned, and your peace made up with God? Are you deſirous from your heart to be reconciled to God through Jeſus Chriſt, the bleſſed Peace-maker? 6. Do you heartily approve of the goſpel-method of reconciliation, by the righteouſneſs and ſacrifice offered by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as your Surety, in your name and ſtead? And is your ſoul deſirous to chuſe and accept of Chriſt for your Mediator and Saviour, in all his offices, of Prophet, Prieſt, and King? 7. Do you renounce all confidence in any other, all dependence on your duties and righteouſneſs, and put your whole truſt and confidence in Chriſt, and the merits of his death and blood, ſaying, "Whom have I heaven but thee? and there is none in all the earth that I deſire beſides thee." Do you believe that there is no ſalvation in any other, and that there is no name under heaven whereby you can be ſaved, but Jeſus Chriſt only? 8. Do

you desire to be wholly renewed and sanctified by virtue of Christ's blood, and to shew forth the reality of your faith by good works and a holy life, for the time you have to live in the world? And, as an evidence thereof, are you willing to restore what you have taken wrongfully from any, and to forgive all wrongs done to you by any, and cast out all malice or hatred you have borne to any, and ask forgiveness of any you have injured? 9. Do you believe that Christ is coming at the last day to judge all the world, both the quick and the dead, whom he shall then raise from the grave, and that your dead body shall rise with the rest? 10. Do you believe the immortality of the soul, and its living in a separate state after death, and that the souls of believers do immediately pass into glory, where they shall ever be with the Lord?

V. In dealing with the sick, you are to separate between the precious and the vile, and to make a difference between the converted and the unconverted. And seeing different applications are requisite, you are, according to your knowledge, to study to suit your counsel admonitions and prayers, to their state and condition; not using the same words to the ungodly as you use to the godly, lest you flatter them with ill grounded hope that their state is safe, while they are strangers to a work of regeneration. That great truth is to be declared to all, that, "Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." O it is dangerous to speak peace, where God speaks war.

VI. If the sick person seem to be secure, or have not a due a sense of his sins; endeavours must be used to convince him of the guilt, pollution, and danger of them, in order to his humiliation. Presumptuous sinners are not to be flattered, lest we betray their souls into eternal ruin, and so their blood be required at our hand. No fond love, no slavish fear, must keep us from telling them the hazards of their present state. Their secure conscience must be awakened to see the demerit of sin, and the terribleness of the justice of a sin-revenging God, before whom no Christless impenitent sinner can stand: This is necessary in order to a sinner's

ſinner's diſcovering his loſt caſe in himſelf, and his fleeing to Chriſt for refuge. It is God's method, firſt to caſt down the ſoul before he lift it up; to plough the heart by conviction, before he caſt in the ſeed of conſolation.

VII. If the ſick perſon hath ſtudied to walk uprightly, but is at preſent diſcouraged upon account of the ſharpneſs of the rod, Satan's temptations, the guilt of ſin, fear of death, or the like; then ſuitable counſels, reſolutions, and comforts, are to be tendered, in order to his ſettlement and ſupport. Particularly, he may be told, that ſharp rods are no ways inconſiſtent with divine love; nay, frequently, they are a ſign of it: for, as ſtanding waters turn corrupt, becauſe they have no current; and thoſe who are not poured from veſſel to veſſel, their taſte remains, and their ſcent is not changed; therefore God, in order to take away the ſcent of the corrupt nature from us, is pleaſed to change us from ſtate to ſtate, by croſſes and ſickneſs to ſalvation. And as Noah's ark, the higher it was toſſed with the flood, the nearer it mounted towards heaven; ſo the ſanctified ſoul, the more it is exerciſed with affliction, the nearer it is lifted towards God. Again, it is proper to ſet before him the freeneſs and fulneſs of God's grace, the ſufficiency of righteouſneſs in Chriſt, and his rich and gracious offers in the goſpel; by which we are aſſured, that all who repent, and believe with their heart in God's mercy through Chriſt, renouncing their own righteouſneſs, ſhall not periſh in their ſins, but have life and ſalvation in him, and that believers in Chriſt are aſſured of victory over Satan, death and all their enemies, becauſe Chriſt their head hath by his croſs conquered the devil, unſtinged death, triumphed over the grave, and obtained victory for all his members; ſo that neither life nor death, principalities nor powers, ſhall be able to ſeparate them from God's love in Chriſt.

VIII. If a ſick man be ſo tempted and troubled in conſcience, that he is in hazard of deſpairing of God's mercy; it is neceſſary to inform him of the greatneſs and infiniteneſs of God's mercy, that the moſt notori-

ous ſinners have been pardoned and ſaved by it, and it is ſtill offered in the goſpel to the vileſt of ſinners. Though God foreſaw all the ſins which the world would commit, yet theſe did not hinder him from loving the world, ſo, that he gave his only begotten Son to death, to ſave as many as would believe and repent: ſo that the ſins of one man can never hinder God from loving his ſoul, and forgiving his ſins, when he ſincerely deſires to repent and believe. The cry of the moſt grievous ſins that are recorded (ſuch as thoſe of Sodom) could never reach higher than unto heaven, Gen. xix. 13. But David aſſures us, Pſal. cviii. 4. that the mercy of God is great, and reaches up higher than the heavens, ſo that it over-toppeth the greateſt of all our ſins. If the mercy of God be greater than all his works, it muſt ſurely be greater than all our ſins.

Again, lay before him the infinite virtue of Chriſt's blood: Why? It is not the blood of a mere man, but the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. And, are there any ſins ſo great, or guilt ſo heinous, but the blood of God can waſh away? This was godly Crammer's ſupport that day he ſuffered martyrdom, when his ſin of renouncing the Proteſtant doctrine ſtared him in the face: "Surely (ſaid he) God was made fleſh, and ſhed his blood, not for leſſer ſins only, but for great ſins alſo." He was ſadly diſcouraged, and wept abundantly, till he eyed this meritorious blood, and then he took heart, and died with courage. O this price was ſo great, that it could have merited pardon for the ſins of all the devils in hell, as well as for all the men on earth, though every one of them had been red as crimſon. Yea, the leaſt drop of this blood is of more merit to procure the mercy of God for our ſalvation, than all our ſins can be of force to provoke the wrath of God for our damnation; why? The greateſt of our ſins are but the ſins of a man, but the leaſt drop of Chriſt's blood is the blood of God.

Moreover, let him be put in mind of the willingneſs and readineſs of our Redeemer to receive all ſinners that came to him in the days of his fleſh, though driven to him by ſickneſs and affliction; ſo that he never put any of

them

them away without their errand, that came crying for mercy. Nay; he many times ſought out objects of his mercy, that were not thinking of coming to him, as ſhowed before. Obſerve the gentleneſs of our Lord's carriage to Judas himſelf, in calling him friend, after his moſt treacherous dealing, Mat. xxvi. 50. "Friend (ſaid he) wherefore art thou come?" Had wretched Judas laid hold on the word friend out of the mouth of Chriſt, as Benhadad did the word brother, from the mouth of Ahab; doubtleſs Judas ſhould have found the God of Iſrael more merciful than Benhadad found the king of Iſrael.

Laſtly, Let him conſider, that to deſpair of God's mercy caſts the greateſt diſhonour upon the Divine Majeſty, and is a ſin more heinous than all the ſins which we have before committed: Why? It doth charge the great God as guilty of perjury, who hath ſolemnly ſworn, that he deſires not the death of a ſinner, but rather that he ſhould repent and live, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. God was more diſpleaſed with Cain for deſpairing of his mercy, than for murdering of his brother: and with Judas for hanging himſelf, than for betraying his maſter: Why? Becauſe that by their deſpair they would make the ſins of mortal men greater than the infinite mercy of the eternal God.

DIRECT. IV. Be earneſt in Prayer to God for your Friends, when Sick or Dying. Pray with them and for them.

FREQUENTLY ſick perſons are ſo diſquieted with pain and trouble, that they are out of caſe to pray for themſelves, and therefore they have the more need of the prayers of others. David faſted and prayed for his enemies, when they were ſick, Pſal. xxx. 13. much more ought we to pray for our friends in that caſe. Never did they need our prayers ſo much, as when they are called to enter upon an unchangeable condition, to go to their long home, even that place wherein they muſt abide for ever. Now they are in the land of

of prayer, and it is now or never that you muſt pray and beg mercy for them. When their life is gone, they go from the land of prayer, and are fixed in that place, whence they ſhall never remove: then all your prayers and cries for them will be in vain. If your friend be a ſtranger to Chriſt, he is on the brink of hell, and knows it not; and will you not cry to God to open his eyes, and ſave him from falling into that devouring pit out of which there is no redemption? You would be willing to ſit up a whole night for the relief of his body; and will you not ſpend a part of a night for the good of his ſoul, that is a thouſand times more valuable? Now the queſtion is, whether this precious ſoul ſhall be Chriſt's or the devil's for ever? And when will you wreſtle for your friend, if you do it not now? If the ſick perſon be a child of God, you may pray for him with the more comfort, and expectation to be heard. You may, in that caſe, ſend the ſame meſſage by prayer to Chriſt, that the ſiſter of ſick Lazarus did, John xi. 3. "Lord, behold he whom thou loveſt is ſick." Lord, pity him, comfort him, abate his diſtemper, and relieve him from it, if it be thy will: if not, grant him thy gracious preſence and ſafe conduct through the Jordan of death, and a happy landing in the Canaan of glory.

We are told, that the prayers of the righteous, in ſuch caſes, do avail much, James v. 16. and this, to encourage us to pray one for another. Whatever be the ſick perſons condition, ſuch confeſſions and petitions as theſe followiug may be made uſe of in prayer for him.

PETITIONS FOR THE SICK.

LORD, thou firſt breathedſt into man the breath of life; and, when thou takeſt away that breath, he dies, and returns again to his duſt. May we be duly ſenſible of our dependance on thee for all that we enjoy. We acknowledge, that our great abuſe of the many days of health and welfare thou affordeſt us doth juſtly deſerve the viſitation of ſickneſs and diſeaſes. Wo is us, we lie down

under a burden of ſin, both original and actual; we are all children of wrath by nature, and under the curſe of a broken law: and all other miſeries, temporal and ſpiritual, diſtempers, pains, death and hell itſelf, are the iſſues thereof. Be merciful to the ſick perſon under thy hand; diſcover to him his ſins, and the cauſe why thou contendeſt with him. Make him to ſee that he is loſt in himſelf, and wholly unable to ſatisfy the demands of offended juſtice; and do thou reveal Chriſt to his ſoul for righteouſneſs and life. O give him thy holy Spirit to create and ſtrengthen faith, that he may lay hold on Chriſt as offered in the goſpel, work in him the grace of true repentance. Enable him to ſearch his heart and try his ways, ſo as he may diſcover every accurſed thing, every Achan in the camp, that hath provoked the Lord againſt him. When thou putteſt him in the furnace, be pleaſed to ſtand by, and overſee the metal while it is melting in it. Try him as ſilver is tried, and bring him out purified, and let him loſe nothing in this furnace but his droſs. Remove his ſins from thy preſence, as far as eaſt is from weſt, that they may never trouble his conſcience, nor riſe in judgment againſt his ſoul. However bitter the cup may be, let it be medicinal to cure all the diſeaſes of his ſoul. O that theſe afflictions, which are but for a moment, may work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory through Jeſus Chriſt the purchaſer!

Look down from heaven, the habitation of thy holineſs, behold his affliction and his pain, and forgive all his ſin. Shew ſuch pity to him as a father doth to his child, and lay no more upon him than he is able to bear. Lord, give patience and ſtrength anſwerable to the burden of trouble thou haſt laid on him. In time of his weakneſs uphold him by thy ſtrength. Relieve his wants out of thy infinite fulneſs. Lord, thou knoweſt his frame, and remembereſt that he is duſt; ſave him from extremity of trouble, either abate his pain, or increaſe his patience to endure what thou meaſureſt out to him. Give him the evidences of all the graces of thy Spirit. Arm and defend him againſt all the ſuggeſtions and temptations of Satan. Take his heart wholly

off

off the world, and ſet his affections on things above. Lord, make uſe of this chaſtiſement of his body as a medicine to cure his ſoul, by drawing his ſoul, that is ſick of ſin, to thyſelf. O enable him, in a penitent believing manner, to come by repentance to Chriſt, his ſoul phyſician, to get it healed of all its maladies. Sanctify his ſickneſs, and let the fruit of it be to purge away his ſin.

If God ſhall be pleaſed to add to his days, bleſs all means of his recovery. Remove the diſeaſe; renew his ſtrength, both outward and inward; heal his ſoul as well as his body. And enable him to walk tenderly before God, and carefully to remember and perform ſuch vows and promiſes of obedience as men are apt to make in time of ſickneſs.

If God hath determined to finiſh his days by the preſent viſitation; let him find ſuch evidence of the pardon of his ſins, of his intereſt in Chriſt, and eternal life, as may cauſe his inward man to be renewed, while his outward man decayeth; that he may meet death without fear, caſt himſelf wholly on Chriſt without doubting, and deſire to be diſſolved, that he may for ever be with Jeſus Chriſt. Lord, make his laſt works better than his firſt, and the day of his death better than the day of his birth. Make his laſt words his beſt words, his laſt thoughts his beſt thoughts, and his laſt hour his beſt hour. O let him die the death of the righteous, and let his laſt end be like his. Let the eyes of his ſoul be opened to ſee his ſins and his Saviour, before the eyes of his body be ſhut by death. Take away the ſting of death, the guilt of ſin, that he may walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death and fear no evil. Open thou his lips, that his mouth may ſhow forth thy praiſe, before he go to the place of ſilence. And when his ſtrength doth fail, and his tongue is not able to utter words, let the blood of Chriſt ſpeak for him in heaven. And let thy holy Spirit within him, make requeſts for him with ſighs and groans that cannot be uttered. When the ſight of his eyes doth fail him, let the eyes of his faith be ſtrengthened, that his ſoul (with Stephen at his death) may behold Jeſus Chriſt

Chriſt in heaven ready to receive him. Lord, ſtand by him in his laſt conflict with his enemies, Satan and death, that he may overcome both, and be more than a conqueror through Chriſt that hath loved him. Into thy hands we commend his ſpirit.

Lord, teach us, who do ſurvive, by this and other like daily ſpectacles of our mortality, to ſee how frail and uncertain our condition is, and ſo to number our days, that we may ſeriouſly apply our hearts to heavenly wiſdom, through Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.

DIRECT. V. Be careful to furniſh your Friends with ſuitable Company, and ſpiritual converſe, when they are Sick or Dying.

AS worldly company and converſe are great hindrances, ſo ſpiritual company and converſe are ſpecial helps to the ſick and dying. Now, that the friends of the ſick may prevent the one, and provide for the other, let the following advices be remembered.

1. Mind your friends timeouſly to make their wills, and diſpatch the ſettlement of their worldly affairs, that ſo they may not be diſturbed at the laſt, nor any wiſe diverted from their main work, by thoughts or diſcourſe about the world. A mind abſtracted from the world is a moſt ſuitable diſpoſition for a-dying man. You cannot carry the things of this world with you when you go hence; and it is not fit you ſhould carry the thoughts of them.

2. Keep carnal company from them as much as poſſible, and all thoſe that would divert them by idle or worldly diſcourſe. It is both impertinent and cruel, to throw in ſuch impediments in the way of thoſe that are going ſpeedily to their endleſs ſtate.

3. Do what you can to get faithful miniſters and godly Chriſtians to be much about them, who are fit to inſtruct and counſel them about their ſouls matters, and alſo to pray with them and for them.

4. Be often minding your ſick friends of their chief work, and thoſe things which belong unto their

peace. Whatever be their ſtate, whether gracious graceleſs, it is proper to be minding them, 1. Of vanity and emptineſs of the world, that can neit give eaſe to the body, nor comfort to the ſoul, when ther of them is in trouble. 2. Of the ſinfulneſs of which is the ſpring of all diſeaſes and miſeries wha ever. 3. Of the precioufneſs and uſefulneſs of Ch to a ſinner in all caſes, and eſpecially at a dying ho 4. Of the inexpreſſible felicity of believers in Chriſt ter death, &c.

Laſtly, If you think yourſelves not able to inſtruc adviſe your ſick friends as they ſtand in need, then r ſome good book to them, that may be ſuitable to condition of their ſouls; and, if you have not a fi at hand, read ſome chapters or directions of this b to them, as you may ſee moſt proper for them. I above all books, read to the ſick the holy ſcriptures, ſome particular chapters and pſalms there; ſuch as laſt three chapters of Geneſis; the laſt chapter of D teronomy;—the 17th chapter of the 1ſt book of Kin —the 2d chapter of the 2d book of Kings;—the 1 and 19th chapters of Job;—the Pſalms of David, particularly the 6th, the 23d, 25th, 30th, 38th, 4 42d, 49th, 51ſt, 71ſt, 73d, 77th, 88th, 89th, 9(103d, 116th, 118th, 130th, 142d, 143d, and ſevera ther Pſalms;—the 12th chapter of Eccleſiaſtes;— 38th, 53d, 54th, and 55th chapters of Iſaiah;— three laſt chapters of Luke;—the 14th, 15th, 1(17th, and 20th chapters of John;—the 8th chapter the Romans;—the 15th chapter of the 1ſt Corinthia —the 5th chapter of the 2d Corinthians;—the 4th the 1ſt Theſſalonians;—the 11th and 12th of the H the three laſt chapters of the Revelation, and the li

DIRECT. VI. Be likewiſe ſuitably concerned for Bodies of your Friends, when they are Sick.

If you would evidence a ſuitable concern for the then you muſt deal tenderly and compaſſionately w them in their ſickneſs, bear with their impatience fretti

fretting, weary not of them, nor grudge at the trouble they put you to; for ſhortly you yourſelves may be in the like caſe, when you ſhall be as great a trouble to others, as your friends are now to you.

Again, it is neceſſary to employ phyſicians, and uſe the beſt means for the recovery of your friend's health. The means indeed muſt not be truſted to inſtead of God, but uſed in ſubſerviency to him, who hath appointed them, and can only give ſucceſs to them. We muſt beware of Aſa's ſin that ſought to the phyſicians, and not to the Lord. Let us neither take food nor phyſic without prayer to God for his bleſſing thereupon.

DIRECT. VII. When the ſickneſs of your Relations or Neighbours doth iſſue in death, ſtudy a Chriſtian and ſuitable behaviour under ſuch a diſpenſation.

WHEN a parent loſeth a promiſing child or a child loſeth a loving parent, or when death deprives us of any near relation, it is a ſpeaking and trying Providence; and we have much need of grace and counſel from God to carry aright under it. Let us obſerve theſe advices.

I. It is neceſſary, in ſuch a caſe, that we have a tender ſenſe and feeling of God's afflicting hand. There are two extremes which we muſt equally avoid; viz. to make light of the death of relations, and to be exceſſively grieved on that account. God will have us neither to deſpiſe his rod, nor faint under it, Heb. xii. 5. God is diſpleaſed with thoſe that are ſtupid and inſenſible under ſuch afflictions. Why? They deſpiſe his rod, and make light of his corrections. Hence he complains of theſe, Jer. v, 3. "I have ſmitten them, but they have not grieved." God will have us to feel his hand, to enquire into the meaning of the rod, and ſearch for thoſe ſins that have provoked God to ſmite us. It is a ſign of a naughty, ſelfiſh and unchriſtian ſpirit, to be unconcerned for the death of friends; and much more is it ſo in thoſe children, who have a ſecret

ſatisfaction in the death of parents, becauſe of the worldly riches or liberty which they get thereby. God uſeth to follow this wicked temper with his heavy judgments even in this life.

II. Conſider that God is calling you, by the death of others, to keep up lively and laſting impreſſions of death and eternity upon your ſpirits. God knoweth how advantageous it would be for men ſo to do; and therefore he ſets frequent ſpectacles of mortality before their eyes for this end. But ſuch is the corruption and earthlineſs of our minds, that we ſoon forget the thoughts of death. When we ſee our friends in the pangs of death, or laid in the grave, it ſtrikes us with ſome fear and concern, to think that one day this will be our own caſe: but no ſooner is the dead interred and the grave filled up again, than all thoſe ſerious thoughts begin to vaniſh, and men return to their ſins and pleaſures as before. Ah, what folly is this! ſhould not men always keep alive the ſerious thought of death and a future ſtate? are we not always alike mortal? are we not as liable to death's arreſt at other times, as when examples are before our eyes?

III. When God takes away your children or relations, let it draw your heart and affections more toward God and things above. As when a ſhepherd taketh up in his arms a lamb of the flock, the ewe followeth him of her own accord, and will not leave him; ſo, when the great Shepherd of the ſheep taketh a child or friend from you, it ſhould cauſe you to follow after him, and deſire to be with him. But one may ſay, that is not the caſe with me; I fear the wolf hath got the ſtrayed ſheep, and devoured it. Then even that ſuſpicion ſhould make you run to the good Shepherd, abide with him and keep cloſe by the footſteps of the flock, and beware of ſtraying in thoſe paths wherein deſtroyers go. When God taketh from you thoſe relations whom you dearly loved, he calls you to take your love off the fading creatures, and to ſet it on the eternal Creator: when the weak branch is taken off, then claſp to the body of the tree, which will not fail you.

IV.

IV. In ſuch trials, ſtudy a humble and patient ſubmiſſion to the will of God, who in his ſovereign wiſdom and pleaſure hath taken your child or friend from you. Remember who hath done it, even he who gave all men their lives, and hath the abſolute power and right to diſpoſe of mens lives as he thinks beſt. If your fellow-creature do any thing that diſpleaſeth you, you may both aſk who did it, and why he did ſo? But, when God doth any thing to you, you muſt remember he is the potter and you are the clay; and that he may make or mar his clay veſſels; yea, break them in pieces at his pleaſure; "and there is none that can ſtay his hand, or ſay to him, what doſt thou? be ſtill, and know that I am God," Pſal. xlvi. 10. The maſter of a family gathers at his pleaſure the flowers and fruits of his gardens; ſometimes he cuts off the buds, ſometimes he ſuffers them to bloſſom; ſometimes he gathers the green fruit, ſometimes he ſtays till it be ripe; and every body thinks he may do with his own what he pleaſeth; and, ſhall not the Almighty God have liberty much more to diſpoſe of all that grows in his own territories at his pleaſure? The maſter of the family hath not created the trees and plants of his garden; but God hath made and faſhioned all the children of men with his Almighty hand.

It is the ſenſe of this ſovereign right and dominion of God over his creatures, that hath made his people to be ſilent under the greateſt loſſes. Hence Aaron, when he loſt his two ſons by a ſudden and extraordinary ſtroke, it is ſaid of him, Lev. x. 3. "And Aaron held his peace. He opened not his mouth, becauſe it was a ſovereign God that did it. So holy Job, when he loſt all his children by one blow, patiently ſubmits to this abſolute Lord, Job. i. 21. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; bleſſed be the name of the Lord." Job knew that God's relation to them was far nearer than his, and his right to diſpoſe of them was indiſputable. It was a holy and excellent ſpeech of that honourable perſon Lord Dupleſſis, at the death of his only ſon; "I could not have born this from a man, but I can from God."

V. Guard againſt immoderate grief and exceſſive ſorrow for the death of children or near relations; for this is ſinful and offenſive to God. Now, grief is ſinful and immoderate, when it makes you grudge at God's diſpenſation, murmur at his will, turn unthankful to him for the mercies you enjoy, overlook all bypaſt favours and lament a temporal more than a ſpiritual loſs. Alas! there are many who can bewail a dead friend far more than a dead heart, and the loſs of a child more than the loſs of God's countenance. Now, for preventing this exceſſive ſorrow, conſider theſe things.

1. If you be Chriſtleſs and impenitent, you have reaſon to bleſs God that the ſtroke was not at your own life, for then you had been eternally miſerable and without hope. What is the temporal loſs of a child, to be eternal loſs of your own ſoul? O it is far better to be childleſs and friendleſs on earth, than to be hopeleſs and remedileſs in hell.

2. Conſider how little ground you have to complain of any loſs or ſtroke you meet with on earth. If you eye God's ſovereignty and power over you, you have cauſe to be thankful that he hath not annihilated you and your relations both long ere now, ſeeing he hath as full a dominion to reduce you to nothing, as to bring you from nothing. Though God ſhould daſh us againſt the walls, as a potter doth his veſſel, no man could have reaſon to ſay, *What doſt thou?* or, *Why doſt thou uſe me ſo?* Jer xviii. 6. "O houſe of Iſrael, cannot I do with you as this potter? ſaith the Lord." Nay, he hath a greater right to deal ſo with us, than a potter with his veſſel, for God hath contributed all to his creature, that it hath, but the potter never made the clay which is the ſubſtance of the veſſel, nor the water that is needful to make it tractable. All that the potter doth is only to mould the clay into ſuch a ſhape; beſides, the potter's body is no better than the clay he makes his veſſel of; nay, perhaps that very clay might once have been ſome part of the body of a man as good as the potter himſelf. Now, ſhall the potter have ſuch abſolute power over that which is ſo near and like to him, and ſhall not God have it over that which is infinitely diſtant from him? That

That word, Dan. iv. 34. 35. "The Moſt High doth according to his will," is enough to ſilence the murmurings of all men under ſtrokes and loſſes.

2. If you eye the hand of God as moſt juſt and righteous in what you have met with, you have no ground to complain. Have you not procured all this to yourſelf? Is not God moſt juſt in all that hath come upon you? Nay, if you conſider your ſins and God's abſolute dominion over you, you muſt own he might have dealt with you in a ſmarter manner than he hath done; inſtead of one affliction you might have had a thouſand.

3. Look to the mercy that is mixed with the rod. It is a wonder that this great Sovereign, who is ſo provoked by us, ſhould allow us any mercy at all, and yet we receive innumerable benefits from him. Whatever be our afflictions, ſurely they are far leſs than our iniquities deſerve. Hath he caſt your child into the grave? He might juſtly have thrown your ſoul into hell. It is of the Lord's mercy you are not conſumed. Why ſhould a living man complain? A man out of a grave, and out of hell likewiſe, hath ſurely no reaſon.

4. If you compare your affliction with the trials of others of God's people; yea, and thoſe ſaints who have been moſt eminent, you have no reaſon to grudge at your loſs. You have one child dead, but Aaron (who is called the ſaint of the Lord, Pſal. cvi. 16.) had two at a ſtroke; nay, Job, whom God commends above all the ſaints in his day, had all his children ſlain by one blow, and both theſe eminent ſaints had theſe loſſes by an immediate and extraordinary ſtroke from God. Some godly parents have ſeen their children live to prove ſcandals to religion, and a grief of mind to themſelves, and would have thought it a mercy if God had taken them away when young. Say not then, that there is no ſorrow like your ſorrow; for the cup which many others have drunk, hath had more bitter ingredients in it than yours.

3*dly*, Conſider that exceſſive grief cannot better your caſe, it may well make it worſe. If you ſtruggle and contend under God's hand, you act a fooliſh part; as a bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoke, that by his ſtruggling

gling galls his neck, and makes the yoke the more uneaſy; or like a bird fluttering in a net, that, inſtead of freeing, doth the more entangle itſelf. Thus, by immoderate ſorrow and fretting under the ſtroke, you ſin the more againſt God, and make your burden the more heavy.

4thly, Remember the tranſactions of thy ſoul with God, in the day thou enteredſt into covenant with him. When thou ſaweſt thyſelf on the brink of hell, and a burden of ſin preſſing thee down, and no hope for thee but in Chriſt; then your cry was, "NONE BUT CHRIST; take children, take relations, riches, and all things in the world from me, and give me Chriſt. I give up myſelf, and all I have, to be diſpoſed at thy pleaſure; thy will, Lord, ſhall be my will," &c. Now God is taking thee at thy word, and trying thy ſincerity in what thou ſaid and profeſſed to him ſo ſolemnly. He hath diſpoſed of thy dear relation as pleaſed him: O believer, doſt thou rue the bargain? Wouldſt thou take thy word again? Where is thy covenanted ſubmiſſion to the will of God, and thy promiſed contentment with all his diſpoſals?

5thly, Doſt thou not believe that a covenanted God is better to thee than all the friends in the world? Cannot God ſoon make up the greateſt loſs to thee, if thou turn to him by prayer, and pour out thy heart and ſorrows in his boſoms? What are the world's comforts to God's comforts? A ſmile of God's face in prayer can ſoon ſweeten thy bitter cup, and make thee forget all thy ſorrows, Pſal. xciv. 19. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my ſoul." The Author of the fulfilling of the ſcriptures, tells us of one Patrick Mackilwræ, an eminent ſaint in the weſt of Scotland, who having loſt his dear and only ſon, got to his cloſet; and there poured out his ſoul freely to the Lord. When he came out to his friends at length, who were waiting to comfort him, and fearing how he would take ſuch a heavy ſtroke, he returned from prayer with a cheerful countenance, and told ſome of his friends, who aſked him the reaſon of his cheerfulneſs, "That he had got that in his retirement with the Lord, that,

that, to have it afterwards renewed, he would be content to loſe a ſon every day."

6. Seriouſly conſider that you are but a few days journey behind him for whom you mourn, and that you will quickly overtake him, and be with him again. This allayed David's ſorrow for his child, 2 Sam. xii. 23. "I ſhall go to him." It is our expecting to live long here, to enjoy the comfort of relations, that commonly makes us grieve ſo much for their death; for, if we looked on ourſelves as men that were to die in a few days, we would not be ſo much troubled for our friends, that are gone but a little ſpace before us.

7. If your friends are gone to heaven, you have more reaſon to rejoice with them than to mourn for them; ſeeing they are unſpeakably happier where they now are, than they could have been with you. It is the moſt fervent deſire and wiſh of every true Chriſtian to be in heaven; and, will you grieve, becauſe God hath taken your relation thither, where you deſire to be yourſelf above all things? As Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples before his death, John xiv. 28. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, becauſe I go unto the Father:" So, if your departed friend could ſpeak to you from heaven, he would ſay, "If you loved me with a pure ſpiritual love, ye would rejoice that I am gone to my Father, where I am more happy than you can poſſibly conceive of me."

Object. "Had I ground to think that my friend is gone to heaven, it would eaſe me; but, alas, I fear it is otherwiſe."

Anſ. 1. It doth not belong to us to dive into the eternal ſtate and condition of thoſe that are gone off the ſtage. Theſe ſecret things belong to God, who exerciſeth his mercy or juſtice toward ſinners according to his ſovereign will.

2. Suppoſing the worſt, you ought to ſubmit to the incontrouable ſovereignty of God, who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. He is of one mind, and who can turn him? The Lord cut off Aaron's two ſons in the very act of

ſin and rebellion againſt him, and yet Aaron held *his* peace, and ſo ought you.

3 Whatever be the lot of others hereafter, you have reaſon to be thankful to God for his diſtinguiſhing mercy, in ſaving you from thoſe flames that others fall into, and giving you good hope through grace of glorifying God above for ever.

DIRECT. VIII. Let the Sickneſs and Death of others be a warning to you in time of Health, to make due preparation for the time of Sickneſs and of Dying, which is before your hand.

WHEN you ſee your friends and neighbours in a ſickly, weak, or dying condition, the language of the diſpenſation to you that are in health is, Prepare for ſickneſs alſo. Nay, the feeble voice of the ſick doth proclaim this warning as loudly, as if they ſhould lift up their voice like a trumpet, and ſay to you, "Remember that you muſt lie in the ſame caſe ere long, you muſt alſo groan under pain, loſe your ſtrength and beauty, leave your mirth and company, bid adieu to all the world, and look out for the grim meſſenger death, that is coming to diſſolve the earthly tabernacle, ſend the body to lie in a putrifying grave, and the ſoul to ſtand before God's tribunal, to be ſentenced to an endleſs ſtate." This will be thy caſe, O young man, ſtrong man, healthful man, as really in a little, as it is of thoſe now before your eyes. O how ſoon will it come!—What thoughts will you then have of this world, of ſin and vain company? Will any thing comfort you, then, but the favour of God, the love of Chriſt, and the review of a holy well ſpent life? wherefore do with all thy might now what thy hand finds to do: employ the time of health well in preparing for ſickneſs, and leave nothing to do in time of ſickneſs, which is a moſt unfit ſeaſon for a man to do ſoul-work and ſalvation work in.

I. I ſhall begin with thoſe of the family where the

the harbinger of death do preſently reſide. Surely the warnings of ſickneſs and death ought to be louder in your ears than others, and moſt diligently hearkened unto by you, that lodge under the ſame roof with the meſſengers of the king of terrors. 1. Remember that word, 1 Pet. v. 6. "Humble yourſelves therefore under the mighty hand of God." It well becomes guilty ſinners, all the members of the family, to be humble before a holy God, when he is ſmiting any of the number. Humbly acknowledge his ſovereignty and abſolute dominion over you, ſaying, "Lord thou art the author and founder of families, and thou mayeſt afflict and puniſh them as thou thinkeſt fit. Thou ſetteſt the ſolitary in families, and multiplieſt their number; and thou mayeſt diminiſh them, yea, lay them deſolate according to thy pleaſure. Thou mighteſt have made all the members of the family ſick, as well as one; thou mighteſt have given a deadly blow to parents, children and ſervants at once; yea, have made the houſe in which we live a common grave, and buried us all together in its ruins." Humbly acknowledge the juſtice and mercy of God in the preſent viſitation. "Lord, inſtead of one, we all deſerved to have been thrown on ſick-beds, and all of us to have been ſmitten by death. Thou puniſheſt us leſs than our iniquities deſerve." Acknowledge alſo God's wiſdom and love in the preſent affliction, and humbly ſubmit to take the cup which he hath mingled for you. The cup which our heavenly father hath ordered for his family, ſhall we not drink it? It is a gracious and wiſe God that doth what is done in the family; therefore it is our part to be dumb, and not to open our mouth to quarrel it."

2. The command which the king of Nineveh gave all his ſubjects, when threatened with ruin, Jonah iii. is very proper for a maſter of a family to give to all under his charge, when ſickneſs doth rage among them: "Faſt, and cry mightily to God, and turn every one from his evil way:—Who can tell if God will turn away from his fierce anger, that we periſh not?" when the deſtroying angel gets a commiſſion to ſmite families with mortal and infectious diſeaſes, which ſometimes

go from houſe to houſe like a plague, ſweeping many old and young off the ſtage; then eſpecially it ſhould be a time of mighty crying and pleading with God for mercy. And, ſince our pleading is wholly ineffectual, without an atoning ſacrifice to incenſed Juſtice, let us not forget to bring the all ſufficient ſacrifice of Chriſt's blood along with us, and plead this with God for averting his wrath from our houſes and families. As Moſes ſaid to Aaron, in a time of common calamity, Num. xiv. 46. ſo may I ſay to you that are heads of families, "Take a cenſer and incenſe, and go quickly and make an atonement for them; for there is wrath gone out from the Lord, the plague is begun." Bring the incenſe of Chriſt's ſatisfaction, that great atonement to Divine Juſtice, which was typified by the legal ſacrifices and oblations. Humbly and earneſtly plead that great ſacrifice with God, for turning away the fierceneſs of his wrath. Get the bunch of hyſſop, faith, in order to the ſprinkling of your houſes with that atoning blood, that ſo you and your families may be among the preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus.

Laſtly, Let all in the family where ſickneſs is, and eſpecially the head of it remember that word, Job xxii. 23. "Thou ſhalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles." God hath ſent ſickneſs with this meſſage to you, "Search out family ſins, whether of omiſſion or commiſſion; mourn over them, turn from them, baniſh them far away. Let no vice lodge under your roof. Let family-worſhip be no more neglected, nor ſlightly performed. Let God have both the morning and evening ſacrifice." Now, if the members of thoſe families viſited with ſickneſs, who are in health for the preſent, would thus humble themſelves, cry to God, plead the blood of Chriſt, and reform what is amiſs among them; the preſent affliction would be ſanctified, and they in ſome meaſure prepared for the like trial, when God ſhall be pleaſed to put the cup in their hands.

II. In the next place, let me warn all the friends and neighbours of the ſick, whether they be of the family

mily or not, to improve the day of health, in making ready for the time of ſickneſs. Be much in the exerciſe of ſelf-examination, humiliation for ſin, believing in Chriſt, renewing covenant with God, mortifying of ſin, trimming the lamp, meditating of heaven, living by faith, deniedneſs to the world, ſtudying to overcome the love of life and fears of death. Concerning all which I have given directions in the foregoing chapters of this book, when ſpeaking to the ſick and the diſtreſſed. Theſe exerciſes are not only proper for the ſick, but alſo for thoſe in health; and are ſuitable preparations for ſickneſs and death, and to be ſtudied by all men in every condition. But there are ſome things further moſt neceſſary to be minded by people in time of their health, in order to prepare them for the time of ſickneſs and of dying, before it come.

1. Make your latter will, and keep it by you, that you may not be incumbered with your worldly affairs, in time of ſickneſs, or at a dying hour. Surely it is great wiſdom to put this work by hand in time of health. But I have ſpoken largely of this in Chap. I. Direct VI.

2. Take heed in time of health, that you lay not up ſad proviſion againſt the day of ſickneſs, by your careleſs and untender walk. As it is ſin that brings on ſickneſs upon us, ſo it is ſin that imbitters it unto us. Be beware of all known ſin, and particularly the ſins of earthly mindedneſs, unthankfulneſs for mercies, lukewarmneſs in religion, neglecting to improve Chriſt, neglect of prayer, and formality in it, quenching of the Spirit, falling from your firſt love, breach of vows, miſcarrying under ſignal mercies, ſinning after afflictions, returning to old ſins. Guard againſt theſe evils now in time of health, otherwiſe they will put thorns in your pillow where ſickneſs cometh. Dare not to live in ſuch courſe as you would not adventure to die in. How do you know but your next ſtep may be into the grave? And would you be willing to lie down there in your ſins, with earthly, dead, formal, wandering, and unbelieving hearts?

3. Sit looſe from the world, and live as ſtrangers in

in it, that you may be able to pack up and be gone from it upon ſhort warning. Let death find you dead before hand, dead to the world. If your affections be glewed to the world, it will be a violent rending and ſad parting you will have with it when the dying hour cometh. You will be ready, like Lot's wife, to linger, hanker, and look greedily back again.

4. Keep ſhort reckoning with God and conſcience, that you may not have old ſcores to reckon upon when you come to the death bed. O what ſtinging, pain, and torment may one ſin unmourned for coſt you at that time! let conſcience then bring in the accounts of every day before you ſleep, and ſpeedily make up every controverſy that may fall out between God and thy ſoul.

5. Dwell much upon the thoughts of death, that you may learn to be acquainted and familiar with it, as Job was, who ſaid, before-hand, "to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my ſiſter," Job xvii. 14. For this cauſe the Egyptians uſed to place a dead man's ſcull in ſome conſpicuous place of their rooms; likewiſe the Jews had their ſepulchres in their gardens of pleaſure, that ſo in the midſt of their delights they might think on their dying time. We read of Philip, king of Macedon, that ordered a page to rouſe him from ſleep every morning with theſe words: "O king, remember that thou art a mortal man." By this often repeated leſſon he laboured to humble his lofty mind, and make his acquaintance with death, that it might not ſeem ſtrange or ſurpriſing to him, when it ſhould actually come and ſnatch him away.

6. Study to ſpend every day as it were to be your laſt, and perform every duty as it were the laſt, ſtill looking on ſickneſs and death as very near. That which makes moſt men ſo unconcerned about ſickneſs, death, and eternity, is, they view them as things afar off, at thirty or forty years diſtance. "They think their time will be long here: Why? they are healthy, of a ſtrong conſtitution, and their fathers lived ſo long; which ſurely are falſe rules to judge by."

by." It was the expectation of many years that helped on the ruin of that rich fool in the goſpel. It were far better for every man to look on himſelf as ſtanding every day and night at the very door of eternity, and hundreds of diſeaſes ready to open the door to let him in. When you lie down at night, leave your heart with Chriſt, and compoſe your ſpirit ſo, as if you were not to awake till the heavens were no more; for certainly that night cometh, of which you will never ſee the morning, or that morning of which you will never ſee the night. But which of your mornings or nights theſe will be, you know not, ſeeing your times are not in your own hands.

7. Set apart ſome time daily for thinking in a retired way on your time that is paſt, and upon eternity that is to come. The neglect of this duty of meditation and retired thinking, is very prejudicial both to the godly and ungodly. It was David's practice to think, and to think upon his ways; which engaged him to reform whatever he found amiſs in them, Pſal. cxix. 59. Oh! it is the ruin of many a ſoul, they are utter ſtrangers to this way of thinking. I have read of a father, who on his death-bed left it as a ſolemn charge upon his only ſon, (who was a prodigal) that he ſhould ſpend a quarter of an hour every day in retired thinking, and let him chuſe any ſubject he pleaſed. The ſon thinks this an eaſy taſk, undertakes it, and after his father's death ſet himſelf to perform his promiſe: One day he thinks upon his by-paſt pleaſures; another day he contrives his future delights; after a while he begins to think ſeriouſly what might be his father's deſign in laying this taſk upon him: At length, he thinks his father was a wiſe and good man, and therefore he ſurely intended and hoped, that, among the reſt of his meditations, he would ſome time or other think of religion. When this had truely poſſeſſed his thoughts, one thought and queſtion comes upon the back of another, about his by-paſt life and future ſtate that he could not contain himſelf in ſo ſhort a confinement, but was that night without ſleep; yea, and afterwards could have no reſt till he became ſeriouſly religious. O that I could perſuade

ſuade all careleſs and unthinking ſouls to go and do likewiſe! Ah, how many ſpend their days in a hurry about worldly affairs, and periſh for want of thinking!

8. Among other ſubjects of your retired thoughts, ſpend ſome time in thinking, how awful and terrible a thing it muſt be for a poor Chriſtleſs ſoul to make its appearance before an angry God after death: For who (ſaid the Prophet) can dwell with devouring fire? Who can abide with everlaſting burnings? I have read of a certain king of Hungary, who being on a time marvellouſly ſad and heavy, his brother, who was a briſk and gallant man, would needs know the reaſon: "Oh brother, (ſaid he) I have been a great ſinner againſt God, and I know not how I ſhall appear before his judgment-ſeat." His brother anſwered, "Theſe are but melancholy thoughts;" and ſo made light of them, as moſt courtiers uſe to do. The king replied nothing at that time; but the cuſtom of that country was, (the government being abſolute) if the executioner ſounded a trumpet at a man's door, he was preſently to be led to execution. The king ſent the executioner in the dead of the night, and cauſed him to ſound his trumpet before his brother's door, who hearing and ſeeing the meſſenger of death, ſprang in trembling into his brother's preſence, falls down upon his knees, and beſeeches the king to let him know wherein he had offended him. "O brother (ſaid the king) you never offended me, but loved me; but is the ſight of an earthly executioner ſo terrible to thee; and, ſhall not I, who am ſo great a ſinner, fear much more to be brought to the judgment-ſeat of an angry God?"

9. Think often how religiouſly men uſe to wiſh they had lived when they come to the ſick and dying time. Thoſe who have ſpent their time moſt careleſsly, begin to have other notions of religion when they ſee the grim meſſenger approaching. Go to their bedſides and aſk them, Whether ſloth or diligence, formality or fervency, drinking or prayer, loving the world or loving Chriſt, be the beſt; would they not tell

ell you, that there are none ſo wiſe as they that are moſt religious? Think, O man in health, with thyſelf, if thou was juſt now upon thy death-bed, and ſaweſt thy friends ſtanding mourning round about thee, but unable to help thee, what would be thy thoughts and diſcourſe at that time? O then, let ſome of the ſame thoughts and diſcourſe fill up every day and hour of thy ife now. Why? Thou knoweſt not but this moment hou mayeſt be as near death as if thy friends and phyicians likewiſe were deſpairing of thy life, and had given ou over for dead.

10. Be employed now in fighting the good fight of ith. You have many enemies to deal with, and eath is the laſt of them. Would you obtain the vicry over them? Then get on the Chriſtian armour, id make much uſe of the ſhield of faith. We read in e book of Eſther, that king Ahaſuerus would not recal e proclamation he had emitted againſt the Jews; but gave them full liberty to take up arms to defend emſelves, and attack their enemies: So here, God ill not recal the ſentence of death he hath paſſed on l men in the garden; but nevertheleſs he allows, yea, mmiſſionates all true Iſraelites to take up arms aainſt death, to conquer and trample it under foot by th.

Laſtly, Be diligent now in health, providing and layg up a ſtock againſt the time of ſickneſs and affliction; hich may contribute to your comfortable living then hen the world's good things will be taſteleſs and comrtleſs to you. As they who have a voyage to go, do ſual the ſhip, and thoſe who have a ſiege to hold out, ke in proviſion; even ſo do you.

1. Get a ſtock of graces againſt that time, eſpecially ſtock of faith, of patience, of humility, ſelf-denial, c. There will be uſe for all theſe then. A little ace, or a little faith, is not enough; for this will int under great afflictions. We read, Matt. xiv. that, hen the winds began to blow fiercely, Peter's little ith began to fail. You have need of a great meaſure patience againſt that time, that you may wait patntly on God till he come to your relief. You know

not but he may lengthen out your trials, and tarry till the fourth watch of the night before he come with deliverance.

2. Provide a ſtock of evidences or marks of grace, and of the love of God, that you may be able to aſſert your intereſt in him as your portion in Chriſt, and may be perſuaded that neither death nor life will ever ſeparate you from him.

3. Get a ſtock of divine experiences. Lay up all the experiences you have had of God's loving-kindneſs, and theſe will give greater relief and encouragement to the ſoul in the day of diſtreſs.

4. Lay up a ſtock of ſermons. Treaſure up the counſels and cordials which they bring you from God's word, that ſo you may, according to Iſa. xlii. 23. *hear for the time to come;* and eſpecially for ſick-beds, when you cannot get ſermons to hear. Then it is, that you ought to live and feed upon the ſermons you have heard.

5. Lay up a ſtock of prayers. Be much in wreſtling with God for help and through-bearing in the day of affliction; and ſo you may expect the gracious returns thereof in the day of calamity.

9. Provide a ſtock of promiſes. Be now gathering theſe ſweet cordials from God's word, lay them up in your heart and memory, and they will be very refreſhing and ſupporting to you in the day of affliction.

DIRECT. IX. Let thoſe who are in health ſet about the work of Repentance, and turning to God in Chriſt timeouſly and quickly: And beware of delaying this work until the time of ſickneſs and dying.

GOD's command to you is, to ſet about the work preſently without any delay, Heb. iii. 15. "To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Matt. xxi. 28. "Go work to day in my vineyard." Eccl xii. 1. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Well, God's voice to you, O man in health [illegible] to-day

to-day. But the devil's voice is to-morrow And which of the two will you hearken to? ſurely it is your wiſdom to obey the voice of your Creater and Friend, and not of your enemy and deſtroyer. *Why?* To-day thou art in health, to-morrow thou mayeſt be in ſickneſs; to day thou art on earth, to-morrow thou mayeſt be in hell; to-day Chriſt is inviting you to come to him, to-morrow he may be ſentencing you to depart from him. And conſider, that the devil, who tempts you to delay this day, will be as ready to tempt you to the ſame to-morrow; and ſo the devil's to-morrow will never come. It will ſtill be to-morrow with him till the laſt hour, that ſo he may get you beguiled out of your whole time and ſalvation together.

Here I ſhall endeavour two things: 1. Bring arguments to perſuade you to repent and cloſe with the offers of Chriſt preſently, without any delay, as God requires. 2. Shew the evil and danger of delaying till the time of ſickneſs and of dying. As to the firſt, viz. arguments for preſent repentance, and againſt delaying the work:

1. Conſider the uncertainty of your life and time to repent. Your life is but a vapour, a little warm breath that is going out and in at your noſtrils, which may be ſtopped by death ere you be aware; thou knoweſt not what will be to-morrow, Prov. xxvii. 1. It was the ſaying of a godly man, when invited to a feaſt upon the morrow, "I have not had a morrow for theſe many years." It was a bad uſe theſe Epicureans made of this uncertainty, Iſa. xxii. 13. "Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we ſhall die." It is much wiſer to ſay, "Let us pray and turn to the Lord, for to-morrow we ſhall die." Nay, you have no ſecurity for one hour to repent in; for God hath a thouſand diſeaſes and accidents ready to ſtop your breath and end your days, whenever he pleaſeth to give them orders. There are many ſecure ſinners, who preſume on long life, but there are none nearer to deſtruction than ſuch; for God loves to diſappoint thoſe that promiſe themſelves a long life in ſin and impenitency, as he did that rich man who was laying up for many years, Luke xii. 19. "This night ſhall

thy ſoul be required of thee." And O what a dark and diſmal night will it be, if death comes before thy repentance! O man, thou never didſt lie down one night with aſſurance of riſing again; thou never didſt draw one breath with aſſurance of drawing another. What madneſs is it then to delay ſalvation work one day or hour longer, and ſo to leave the weightieſt matter in the world at the greateſt uncertainty!

2. Conſider, that though God in his wonderful mercy and patience ſhould prolong your days, yet the longeſt life is ſhort enough for the work you have to do, ſuppoſe you begin it preſently. Nay, had you Methuſalem's years to ſpend, they would be no more than ſufficient to repent and mourn for the ſins and guilt which you have been ſo long contracting; to perform and amend the many things that have been amiſs; to perform all the duties incumbent on you; to make ſure your calling and election, and put your ſouls in a good poſture and preparation for an eternal ſtate, and get them made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light. Now, do you think that all this work can be done in an inſtant, or in a time of ſickneſs or old age, when you are hardly fit to do any thing?—When a man's ſpirit is unable to bear the infirmities of nature, how will he be able to bear the laſhes of a guilty conſcience, or a wounded ſpirit? When the underſtanding is weak, the memory frail, the will obſtinately bent the wrong way, by a long cuſtom of ſinning and neglecting of duty; will that be a fit time to begin the work of repentance and converſion to God? When nature is decayed, and the candle of life juſt ſinking in the ſocket, will you begin then to act for God, and make your light ſhine before men to his glory? O remember, your work is long, your time is ſhort, and though you begin this very hour, you will have no time to ſpare.

3. Delay not this work, becauſe it is not in your power to do it when you pleaſe. It is a deluſion of the devil, to imagine you may repent when you will. No, no; it is God only that giveth repentance, and he gives it when, and to whom he pleaſeth, Acts v. 31. And

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it is a mere peradventure, if ever he give it to a delaying ſinner, 2 Tim. ii. 25. When is it that you may have hopes he will give repentance, but when he calls you to it, and preſcribes means to be uſed for that end? Now, that is, to-day. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice: Now is the accepted time, now is the day of ſalvation." To-day, when God is calling, and the Spirit ſtriving, is the time of finding the Lord, and getting repentance from him. To morrow it may be too late; the Lord's hand may be cloſed, and the door of mercy ſhut. If you refuſe the Spirit when he ſtrives with you, he may leave you, and never put another ſerious thought in your heart of turning to the Lord. O defer not ſeeking repentance till it be too late; for there is a time when the Lord will not be found, and then repentance will not be found, though you ſeek it with tears. Indeed, God hath promiſed mercy to penitent ſinners; but he hath no where promiſed the aids of his grace and Spirit to them that put off their repentance: and he hath no where promiſed acceptance to mere grief and ſorrow for ſin, without faith and fruits meet for repentance; he hath no where promiſed to pardon thoſe, who at laſt promiſe to leave their ſins, when they can keep them no longer.

4. The longer repentance and cloſing with Chriſt is delayed, the difficulty thereof is every day increaſed.—Why? 1. Becauſe of the deceitful nature of ſin, which doth daily bewitch and harden the heart more and more in the practice of it. 2. Cuſtom in any thing hath a ſtrange influence on us, and becomes a kind of ſecond nature, and breeds an almoſt inviſible inclination to whatſoever we have long addicted ourſelves unto, whither it be in action natural or moral. Hence Ovid gives that good advice.

Sed propera, nec te venturas differ in horas:
Qui non eſt hodie, cras minus aptus erit.

Be ſpeedy; put not off till another time:
He who is not prepared to day, will be more unprepared to-morrow.

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He that goes on from day to day, in ſin, will find h indiſpoſition to repent daily increaſed, the habits of ſ ſtrengthened, and himſelf brought at length under th power of an inveterate cuſtom. And if it be hard t break any cuſtom, much more a cuſtom in ſinnin which is ſo agreeable to depraved nature. Hence, ſai the Spirit of God, Jer. xiii. 23. "Can the Ethiopia change his ſkin, or the Leopard his ſpots? Then ma ye alſo do good, that are accuſtomed to do evil." The longer Satan keeps poſſeſſion, the more difficult wi his ejection prove. The devils that poſſeſſed the ma from the womb up, could not be caſt out but by ſom extraordinary way. 4. Delays bring on ſpiritual judg ments from God, ſuch as judicial hardneſs on the hear which will make repentance impoſſible, according t that terrible place, Iſa. vi. 9. 10. "Make the heart o this people fat," &c. Which is quoted no leſs than ſi times in the New Teſtament, as if it belonged only t them that linger and ſit impenitent under goſpel-call

Laſtly, We would reckon ſuch delays madneſs i earthly affairs, which are but trifles when compared t ſalvation-work. If a man's houſe were on fire, we woul count him mad, if he would ſay, it is time enough t quench it to-morrow: or if he were ſtung with a v nemous ſerpent, he would be mad that neglected t ſeek a preſent cure: or, if he had got poiſon in his ſt mach, he would never think he could ſoon enough v mit it up. If a malefactor were condemned to a cru death to-morrow, but had a promiſe of a remiſſion, he ſhould look after it to day; would he be ſo fooli as delay it till next morning? But how much great madneſs is it to delay repenting and fleeing to Chri when God's calls and promiſes relate to the preſe time, and our danger in delaying is infinitely great than in any of the foreſaid caſes? Surely there is r ſting ſo dangerous, no poiſon ſo deadly as ſin; and ca we too ſoon ſeek after the balm of Gilead, the blood o Chriſt for its cure? There is no death like the ſecon death, no fire ſo dreadful as the eternal fire of God wrath; now this fire is already kindled againſt yo

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ſouls; and if it be not timeouſly quenched, it will burn to the loweſt hell. Loſe no time to get it extinguiſhed, by fleeing to the blood of Jeſus.

II. The next thing is to ſhow the evil and danger of delaying this work until the time of ſickneſs and dying. Alas, it is the common practice of the moſt part! but conſider, 1, What wretched ingratitude and baſeneſs there is in it. Whether is it fit ye ſhould give the beſt of your time to God that made you, or to the devil that ſeeks your deſtruſtion? Is it reaſonable that the devil ſhould feaſt on the flower and prime of your youth and ſtrength, and your Creator have no other but the fragments of the devil's table? When the dregs of your time are come, your ſtrength gone, your ſenſes failed, your underſtanding and memory weak, your affections ſpent upon the creature, yea, when you are good for nothing elſe; will ye be ſo baſe as think you are then good enough for God, and for ſalvation-work, which requires all your ſtrength and might? But remember, if you be ſo baſe as to reſerve the dregs of your time for God, you may expect he will be ſo juſt as to reſerve the dregs of his wrath for you, according to that word, Mal. i. 14. "Curſed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and ſacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing." Your youth, ſtrength, health, gifts, talents, are the males of the flock; if you give theſe to the devil, and reſerve the weakneſs of ſickneſs and old age for God, you draw down his curſe upon your heads; and how long will you be able to bear up under the weight of God's curſe? Now, O delaying ſinners, why ſhould you be ſo ungrateful to God, and injurious to yourſelves? God had early thoughts of mercy to you; and will you have nothing but late thoughts of duty to him? Chriſt did not defer his dying for us till he was old; and ſhall we defer living to him, till we be old? Oh, we do not deal with God as we would have him deal with us. When we need help in trouble, we cry, as Pſal. cii. 2 "Lord hear me; in the day when I call, anſwer me ſpeedily." To-day we ſtill make the ſeaſon of mercy, but to morrow the ſeaſon for duty. When mercy is delayed, we impatiently cry, how long? how long? We will not wait

wait God's holy leiſure. But, alas! we would have God to wait our ſinful leiſure. Oh let us be aſhamed of ſuch diſingenuous dealings with our Creator.

2. Death may get a commiſſion to take you off ſuddenly, without giving you any time to repent. You are not ſure to ſee the evening ſtar of ſickneſs, before the night of death overtake you, or that you will have any warning given you before the fatal ſtroke. For how many are there who project long lives, and look for time before death to repent, that get a ſurpriſing call to remove from the earthly tabernacle, and have not one minute to provide another lodging? How many are drowned by a ſudden ſtorm at ſea? And how many killed by outward accidents on land? Some drop down ſuddenly in the ſtreets; ſome die ſitting in their chairs; ſome go well to bed at night, and never ſee the morning; ſome die as quickly by a fit of an epilepſy or apoplexy, as if ſhot with a gun. Thus thouſands are hurried into eternity, and preſented before a tribunal, without being allowed ſo much time as to think one ſerious thought, or ſpeak one word? not one moment to conſider where they are going, or to cry to God for mercy. And how know you but this may be your caſe at death? Muſt it not be the greateſt folly then, to delay your repentance to a dying time, when your life may not be one minute longer?

3. Though you may have ſome time to lie on ſick-beds, how know ye but your ſickneſs may be ſuch as ſhall incapacitate you for ſpiritual work? Some we ſee are ſo oppreſſed with continual ſlumbering and ſleeping, even when death is neareſt, that they are in no caſe to think or ſpeak of theſe things that belong to their eternal ſtate. Others, in high fevers, are troubled with rovings; and have no uſe of their reaſon, ſo that they are not capable to ſettle their worldly affairs; and how much leſs are they fit to ſecure their ſoul's eternal concerns at that time? Some again, are ſo racked with extreme pains and agonies, impatient frettings, and bitter uneaſineſs, that they cannot get one ſettled thought about their ſouls preſent or future ſtate. Others are ſo filled with terror and amazement, at the view of approaching death and eternity, that they cannot compoſe their thoughts

thoughts, to examine themſelves, confeſs their ſins, act faith in a Saviour, or follow any direction that is given them; but go off the ſtage in a confuſion, being incapable to do any thing to purpoſe for their ſouls. Some their diſtemper is ſuch, that they are brought to a great ſtrait between the word of God and the phyſician. The word of God and his miniſters tell them, if they do not mourn for their ſins, and wreſtle for mercy, they cannot be ſaved: but, ſaith the phyſician, if you trouble yourſelf with ſad and melancholy thoughts, you prejudice your body, and hazard your life. O! is this a fit time then to begin your preparation for another world?

4. The Spirit of God being long reſiſted and vexed by many in the day of health, he is provoked to leave them on death-beds to the hardneſs of their own hearts: and ſo they remain, like ſtocks and ſtones, dead and ſtupid to the laſt.

5. The devil, that was buſy all your lives to keep you from repentance, will not be idle at this time; nay, he will be more active then than ever to ruin you, either by cauſing you to ſplit on the rock of preſumption or of deſpair. Sometimes he will tell ſinners then, "You need not trouble yourſelves about your ſouls: God is more merciful than to damn you; the repentance you have already, will ſerve the turn." But if this will not quiet them, he will ſtudy to drive them to deſpair, by telling them, "They have loſt the ſeaſon of repentance and cloſing with Chriſt; and now there is no remedy, no hope for them, and it is in vain to uſe any further means." O then, do not hearken to Satan now, when he tempts you to delay your repentance.

6. Whatever appearance of repentance ſome dying perſons may have, let that be no encouragement to put off till that time. Why, there lieth a juſt ſuſpicion upon a late repentance, that it is ſeldom ſound and ſincere. It is no ſound work, that ariſeth more from fears of hell, than from any real hatred of ſin; more from love to ſelf, than love to God. And it is to be feared, that death-bed repentance is moſtly of this ſort, ſeeing ordinarily it conſiſteth more in grief and fear, prayers and promiſes, than in a hearty loathing of ſin, love to holineſs, or willingneſs

ingneſs to accept of Jeſus Chriſt: For have we not ſ many of theſe penitents, who, in the view of death, h profeſſed great ſorrow for their wicked lives, and ma ſolemn promiſes of amendment; yet when they h happened to recover, all their righteouſneſs hath vani ed, and they have returned to their former ſins as gree ly as ever? And, O delaying ſinner, what ground ha you to think that your death-bed repentance will be a better than theirs? Be wiſe then in time, ſet hearti about ſalvation-work in the day of your health, and d not leave the weightieſt work to the weakeſt time.

Object. I. "But hath not God promiſed mercy t them that repent of their ſins at any time?"

Anſ Yes, to them that repent truly and ſincerely But do not think that it is in your power to repent ſ at any time you pleaſe; no, it is impoſſible you can d it without the influence and aſſiſtance of the Spirit God. And God hath no where promiſed this to tho that put off their repentance to a death bed. There a great difference between a ſick man's howling upo his bed, and ſincere goſpel-repenting. I grant, tru repentance is never too late; but O! late repentan is ſeldom true. True repentance is that which hath care to walk holily, or hath work meet for repentan joined with it. Hence repentance is not only calle *Metancia*, a change of mind; but alſo *Metameleia*, a after care. Now for a death-bed repentance, that ha no ſuch holy care or good works, I know no promiſe i the Bible that annexeth ſalvation unto it.

Object. II. "Do not we read in Chriſt's parable o the labourers, Mat. xx. that ſome were hired and brough into the vineyard at the eleventh hour, and got th ſame reward with thoſe that were hired at the third an ſixth hour?"

Anſ. 1. Theſe that were brought in ſo late, cou ſay for themſelves, ver. 6. "that no man had hir them," or had offered to hire them before; they d no ſooner hear the goſpel-call, and offers of ſalvati through Chriſt tendered to them. But O! this w

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ſtand you in no ſtead, who have had many a call and offer made you at the third, ſixth, and ninth hour, and have refiſted and refuſed them: you will not have it to ſay at the eleventh hour, as theſe had, "No man hath hired us."

2. Theſe men, though they came in but at the eleventh hour, and not being ſooner hired, yet they were labourers in the vineyard, and wrought one hour therein faithfully, in obedience to their Lord's command; and ſo brought forth ſome fruits meet for repentance, and were accepted. But this is no encouragement to any to expect to be brought in at the twelfth hour, when there is no time to work, nor bring forth any fruits to teſtify the ſincerity of their repentance; we have no promiſe of acceptance made to ſuch.

Object. III. "The penitent thief on the croſs ſought mercy from Chriſt at the laſt hour, and got it."

Anſ. That is a ſingular inſtance, and gives no encouragement to delaying ſinners. The ſcriptures contain a hiſtory of more than four thouſand years, and yet, during all that, we have but one example of a man that truly and ſincerely repented when he came to die. And in this man's caſe there was ſuch an extraordinary conjunction of circumſtances, as never happened before, and can never fall out again to the end of the world. This man had the happineſs to die cloſe by the newly-pierced and bleeding wounds of a crucified Jeſus, when he was lifted up from the earth in the height of his love, drawing ſinners to ſalvation; which was a junction that can never have a parallel. Again, the man never had an offer of Chriſt, nor day of grace before now; he ſurrendered himſelf upon the very firſt call: and his faith in Chriſt at this time was truly ſingular and miraculous. He was deſigned by Heaven to be made a rare monument of the power of Chriſt's grace, and a ſpecial trophy of his victory over the devils and wicked men, at a time when they ſeemed to triumph over him, as one crucified through weakneſs.

From all which we may ſee, that this example wi extraordinary, and affords no ground for the preſump tion of delaying ſinners. You may as well caſt your ſelves into the ſea, in hopes of preſervation by a whale from the example of Jonah, as defer repentance now in hopes of repenting on a death-bed, from the exampl of the thief on the croſs. Beſides, your way of ſinnin differs vaſtly from his. He was not guilty of preſump tion, as you are; he did not ſlight Chriſt's calls an offers in the days of his health, and delay his repentin and cloſing with Chriſt, in hopes of an opportunity fo them at the hour of death, as you do. Do you know what God determines concerning preſumptous ſinning You may ſee it, Numb xv. 28. 30 31.; "And th prieſts ſhall make an atonement for the ſoul that ſin neth ignorantly, &c. But the ſoul that doth ough preſumptouſly (whether he be born in the Land, or ſtranger), the ſame reproacheth the Lord: and th ſoul ſhall be cut off from among his people; becau he hath deſpiſed the word of the Lord." O preſump tuous delaying ſinner, let this word of the Lord awake you to a ſpeedy and preſent reſolution to obey his voic "Return ye now every one from his evil way, an make your ways and your doings good," Jer. xviii. 1 Now is the accepted time: if ye will hear his voice, muſt be to day. Lord, ſave us from hardening ou hearts. *Amen.*

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THE

CHURCH'S DANGER,

AND THE

MINISTER'S DUTY:

DECLARED IN A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE OPENING OF THE

SYNOD OF ANGUS AND MEARNS,

AT MONTROSE:

WITH

A PREFACE AND POSTSCRIPT,

TOUCHING

Some more Evils of the present Time.

PREFACE:

CONTAINING

AN ADDITIONAL TESTIMONY

Againſt the Evils of the Time.

HAVE publiſhed the following Sermon, to ſhow
o the world my concern for the Church of Scot-
, and her *Covenanted Reformation*, to promote what
ı her credit and proſperity, and to teſtify againſt
t I judge reproachful and prejudicial to her. I
added ſome things from my papers, which I omit-
n the delivery for want of time; and here I ſhall
ſome things more, for exhonering and explaining
:lf more fully upon the ſaid ſubject.
:eing it is the power of conſcience that obliges me
ıake this appearance, I beg that no man may think I
ł popularity in it, or that I incline to make an ap-
to the people about controverſies which fall in a-
g miniſters: that was never my way; and far leſs
for bringing in ſuch debates upon ſacramental oc-
ns, which ought to be love feaſts among Chriſtians.
in my humble opinion, it is not an improper occa-
for the Moderator of a Synod, in his ſermon at the
ing thereof, which is *concio ad clerum*, to addreſs his
ıren concerning the controverſies or defections of
ime, eſpecially if he ſee his Mother-Church in ex-
e danger thereby; for, what dutiful ſon can be

ſilent

ſilent at ſuch a time, ſeeing it is the proper buſineſs of a Synod, both to provide remedies themſelves, and to addreſs the General Aſſembly to do it when they are at a loſs?

Object. "It is not proper to handle theſe before the People."

Anſ. 1. This hath been the conſtant practice of Moderators at the opening of Synods ſince our bleſſed Reformation, as appears from our church hiſtories. 2. Frequently there are as many of the people attending the Synod's Meetings, whom we cannot prevent, as are hearing the Sermon; and ſo, if this argument hold good, we ſhould not at all open our mouths concerning any of the defections of the time: and we know, ſilence in watchmen is highly condemned by the word of God.

Object. "Is it not ſaid of a dangerous and declining time. Amos v. 13. *Therefore the prudent ſhall keep ſilence at that time, for it is an evil time.*"

Anſ. No doubt ſome miniſters make uſe of that ſcripture to prevent trouble to themſelves, and it hath been caſt up to my thoughts alſo: But, in my opinion, that text doth not point at Prophets, but other private men, whoſe private capacity allows them to keep ſilence when others muſt ſpeak. For Prophets are required to *cry aloud, and not ſpare;* and thoſe who do not, are called *dumb dogs,* Iſa. lvi. 10. Iſa. lviii. 1. I grant, indeed, there is a "time to keep ſilence, as well as a time to ſpeak," Eccl. iii. 7. And the prudent will wiſely obſerve theſe times; and even when the time cometh that they are called to ſpeak of faults, the prudent will mind to do it in a decent manner, eſpecially if ſuperiors be concerned. If any think I have not ſo well obſerved this rule myſelf, it is what I cannot help, ſeeing I have aimed to do it the beſt way I could: and I do here further declare, that I am loth to give offence to any man; my ſincere deſign being, not to caſt reproach upon any of my brethren, but to avert and prevent the reproach of my Mother-church, and to promote her welfare according to my bounden duty.

I never inclined to expoſe my brethren, but rather to cover their miſtakes, and ſpeak charitably of every one; for

for which I have been oftentimes blamed by ſome: but I far rather err upon that ſide than upon the other, ſeeing I myſelf am ſo liable to faults and miſtakes. I never loved the character of an Incendiary, to blow the coal in ſmaller differences, or to aggravate the wrong ſteps of others; but always preferred the character of a peace maker; to compoſe matters, and reconcile parties as much as poſſible; in which alſo I have been blamed, as making too great conceſſions for that end.

Notwithſtanding of all the complaints of defection, I acknowledge there are ſtill in the church many worthy, learned and pious men in the miniſtry, whom I honour, and from whom I would be willing to learn, and whom I pray God may long continue in the Church as a bulwark, under God, againſt the evils of corruption and defection which threaten her; and that he may raiſe up a young ſet to fill their room, when they are called off the ſtage. But at the ſame time I cannot conceal the diſmal apprehenſions which many well-wiſhers of our Zion have of her danger, from the view they have of many of the preſent young Clergy and Preachers, who ſeem to affect a new way of moral preaching and lax management, ſuited to the taſte of many Patrons and Heritors; greedily ſnatch at Preſentations, and concur to get themſelves thruſt into Churches againſt the inclinations both of the Preſbyteries and the people immediately concerned; which dangerous courſe is ſtill continued, notwithſtanding of the awful rebukes given by the providence of God to ſeverals engaged therein.

Beſides what I have ſaid in the Sermon, of the evil of this practice of voluntary courting and accepting Preſentations, without any neceſſity for it; let me here add, that I look upon it as the main ſpring of all our preſent diſtreſs: for, as it brought on violent ſettlements and melancholy diviſions in Pariſhes and Preſbyteries; ſo it gave riſe to the making of theſe Acts by Aſſembly 1732, and Aſſembly 1733, which at preſent occaſion ſo great uneaſineſs in this church, and may iſſue in a moſt deſtructive rupture, if God in his mercy prevent not. For many years this pernicious practice was bogled at, as contrary to Preſbyterian principles, and the intereſt

of the church; till ſome principal perſons in this church, who ought to have been guardians of her peace and liberties, from ſelfiſh principles, moſt ingloriouſly broke the ice to it, about the year 1727, and by their example and countenance drew many others into it; whence it is eaſy to ſee at whoſe door the miſeries of this church are to be laid.

Object. "Our famous Preſbyterian Miniſters in ancient times accepted of Preſentations, and were ſettled this way."

Anſ. Many are grievouſly impoſed upon by this objection, through their not knowing their different ſituations from ours: For, 1. Our worthy anceſtors were but then reforming, and had never been delivered from the yoke of Patronages, under which they groaned: but had they been delivered, as we have been, they would never voluntarily have yielded to the wreathing of that yoke about their necks again, as many of us have done by courting and accepting of the Patrons Preſentations when they were under no neceſſity from the law to do it.

2. In our anceſtors times no man could have acceſs to a Church without the Patron's allowance; but, as the law now ſtands, all among us may be ſettled without owning Patrons at all, if they will have but a little patience: ſeeing the Legiſlature hath been ſo indulging as to enact, "That if the Patron's Preſentation be not accepted within ſix months after the vacancy, the power of planting the Church falls into the hands of the Preſbytery."

3. Our zealous anceſtors gave no countenance to Patronages, but what they were driven to by their ſituation with the law; they would not, for mean ends, have gone into voluntary and unneceſſary accepting of preſentations, as many of us do: but ſeeing, as the law then ſtood, there was no acceſs to Churches without the patron's allowance, they behoved to ſubmit to ſettlements in thoſe Churches to which the patrons were pleaſed to preſent them; and this they did not till they had the conſent of the people, and concurrence of the preſbyteries concerned.

4. Our reforming anceſtors ſtill looked upon Patronages as a grievance and bondage, and from time to time applied to the Legiſlature to get it removed, which at length

length they got done *anno* 1649. But many of us are ſo far from looking on it as a grievance, that they wilfully bring the yoke upon the church, by their officious courting and accepting of Preſentations, after we were in effect delivered by the Legiſlature, *anno* 1719: thus preferring bondage to liberty, a Patron's Preſentation to a Congregation's Call, which our pious anceſtors would never have done. So that our modern acceptors cannot ſkreen their ſhame by their practice, the caſes being ſo widely different.

But, ſuppoſing all were true, which ſome allege, concerning the practice of ſome ancient Preſbyterians, while in their reforming ſtate from Popiſh corruptions and abuſes; what folly, or rather impiety, muſt it be in ſome to be at pains to ſearch out all their infirmities, weakneſſes, defects and imperfections, (which are owned to be ſuch by themſelves) in order to copy after them, eſpecially when we are under no manner of neceſſity to do it from the Legiſlature? What! are they wearied of liberty and purity? Would they have the Church reduced to her infant and more imperfect ſtate again? Do they prefer that to a ſtate of greater purity and perfection, which we might ſtill maintain if we were inclined to it, ſeeing the Legiſlature hath been ſo indulging as to leave the matter at our own choice? Good Lord, deliver us from ſuch infatuation.

The Synods of Angus, Aberdeen and Perth, within theſe two years paſt, have emitted warnings in ſtrong terms againſt this woful officious practice, which have been the origin of ſo much trouble to this church: I wiſh they were ſeconded in the noble attempt by other Synods, or by the Aſſembly or Commiſſion, which, through the Lord's bleſſing, might prove an excellent mean to ſtop the tide of corruption which otherwiſe is like to flow in upon us; O that the Lord, who hath all mens hearts in his hand, may incline and determine them to it.

When I ſpeak againſt Preſentations or encroachments upon our rights and liberties, I have no deſign to ſhow any contempt of my ſuperiors or their authority, whether in the civil or eccleſiaſtic courts; but deſire to ſhow all due regard to the ſame, and to be thank-

ful to them for the peaceable exercise of my ministry, without any sinful terms of communion or imposition on my conscience; as also, to bless God for the valuable blessings and privileges we still enjoy above other nations and churches: but, at the same time, I must own, that the consideration of these mercies should not make me or others easy about any appearance of defection or corruption in the clergy, which, if connived at, may soon bring us to as melancholy a condition as other churches.

I honour our supreme Judicatories, and would desire to support their authority, and fall in with their acts and decisions, as far as possibly I can; but as we must own, with our "Confession of Faith," there is none of them infallible: so we cannot be bound to give implicit faith to all their determinations; nay, when we judge them wrong, we may warrantably reclaim and address to have them rectified, especially if it be in a matter of great moment; though still I own this ought to be done in the most decent and dutiful manner.

I am heartily sorry that instructions, representations, and addresses, from Presbyteries, Synods, and Bodies of Ministers, concerning grievances, have of late years been so disregarded by our Assemblies; and that dissents and protestations by particular Ministers are not allowed nor recorded. This entertainment doth put ministers to think of other ways to exoner their minds. And, upon that account, I do find myself obliged to ease my thoughts in this way concerning the evils and declinings of the present time, lest they should be imputable to me, as a member of the incorporated Body, through my connivance or silence. And though my Testimony be of small value, yet seeing I have been long in the ministry, and know not how soon I may be called to put off this tabernacle, and to give an account of my stewardship; the Lord prepare me for that time, and for the trials which may abide me before it,—I do, in imitation of some of our worthy predecessors, leave this declaration of my mind behind me, that neither the present nor succeeding ages may be imposed upon, as to my sentiments of the evils of the present times. Wherefore, besides what I have

said

ſaid before and afterwards in my Sermon, I here bear my teſtimony againſt the Atheiſm, Infidelity, Immorality, looſeneſs of the age; againſt all Popiſh, Socinian, Arian, Arminian, and Antinomian errors in doctrine; againſt all ſuperſtition and human inventions in worſhip; againſt both Prelacy and Independency in Church Government; againſt all Simoniacal pactions, officious courting of patrons, and accepting of their preſentations; againſt all ſpiritual oppreſſion and perſecution, and encroachments upon the rights and liberties of this Church: As alſo, againſt all thruſting and violent impoſing of Miniſters upon Chriſtian Congregations; and againſt all public Acts and Deeds which favour or promote this impoſing courſe: And likewiſe, againſt all proceedings or deſigns to ſilence or caſt out worthy and uſeful Miniſters for remonſtrating againſt ſuch violent ſettlements, or the Acts which authoriſe and encourage the ſame, or for refuſing to exclude ſcandalous Chriſtians from ſealing ordinances, who are chargeable with no greater fault than want of freedom to own their relation to ſuch paſtors as are violently thruſt in upon them; ſurely there is ſomething groſſer required to excommunicate good Chriſtians, and to depoſe or caſt out good Miniſters, than ſuch things: and I hope we ſhall ſee it, when the God of peace doth incline us calmly to think and deliberate thereupon.

As for the Act of Aſſembly 1732, about which there is ſo much noiſe, I was at the Aſſembly in May 1731, when it began; and, I confeſs, when the overture was in Edinburgh, I carried favourably towards it, though I was not preſent in the Aſſembly when it came in to be reaſoned upon and voted, being called home by expreſs before that time. And that which inclined me to favour the propoſal at the firſt, was the great love I had to the peace and ſafety of my Mother church, which I then ſaw to be endangered by the patronages, and the violent ſettlements begun to be made in conſequence thereof; for I was told by ſome leading men, (whom I thought I might truſt) that there was no way to deliver us from thoſe evils, but by our agreeing among ourſelves upon ſome rule for planting Churches, which we might lay

lay before the civil government, and get ſubſtituted in th room of the Patronage Act, and that ſome of our gre men gave encouragement to expect this. I was the fixed upon no particular rule, but had favourabl thoughts of the Acts of Parliament 1690, which firſt was propoſed to be the rule; and in order thereto it was thought neceſſary to tranſmit the ſame to th Preſbyteries by way of overture, that they might con ſider it, and thereby it would be known how far we coul agree about it. This ſeemed to be pretty plauſible; ſo the notion I always had of the plan of ſettling churches according to the act 1690, was, That the heritors an elders were to chuſe a miniſter, with conſent of th congregation; and when there aroſe any difference a bout the choice, the caſe was brought to the Preſbyter to be cognoſced upon by them, they being impowere to judge what was moſt for edification, whether to pro ceed to ſettle the man that ſeemed to have moſt of th legal votes, or lay him aſide, in caſe others, with the bo dy of the people, continued diſſatisfied, and appoint new moderation: and ſometimes they did the one, an ſometimes the other, as they judged moſt for edification for the good and edification of the pariſh, was th great rule the judicatories then kept in their eye i their determinations, which commonly had a comfort able iſſue. I am ſure this was the ſenſe the Churc put upon the act 1690, and proceeded accordingly i ſettling of churches, for twenty-two years after it wa made, and had much peace and tranquillity in followin that method. As long as I thought the deſign was t keep things upon this footing, I was eaſy (the matte not being great) who had the liberty of voting, provid ing matters were ſo managed, that no man ſhould b thruſt in upon a congregation againſt their will: b aſſoon as I perceived the deſign was to carry the affa of ſettlements beyond the act 1690, I told my mi freely in the Preſbytery, and propoſed an amendme of the overture to prevent any ſuch deſign, whi they were pleaſed to receive and ſend over amo their inſtructions to the Aſſembly 1732, which I a ſorry they did not think fit to notice. And no-

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when I compare the two acts together, I find indeed there is a great difference: For, 1. By the act 1690, the Heretors and Elders are only impowered to *name* and *propose* a perſon to the whole congregation: But, by the act 1732, the Heretors and Elders are impowered to *elect* and *call* one to be miniſter of the pariſh. 2. According to the act 1690, the election was not to be looked upon as finiſhed, till the man was propoſed to the congregation, and their approbation obtained; and, in caſe this was refuſed, the nomination and propoſal was to ſtop, and be laid as an incomplete *unfiniſhed* affair before the Preſbytery, that they might give their judgment whether to proceed any further in it or not: But, according to act 1732, after the Heretors and Elders have voted, the election is ſaid to be *finiſhed*, whether the congregation approve or not; nay, the man is reckoned legally *elected* and *called* to be miniſter of the pariſh, before any notice is taken of the congregation, or the matter at all propoſed to them. 3. According to the act 1690, and the ſenſe which was to be put upon it, if the body of the heads of families did object againſt the man named by the majority of Heretors and Elders, and ſay he had not an edifying gift, or that it was not ſuited to their capacities, and that they had not freedom in their conſciences to conſent to his being their miniſter; the Preſbytery judged ſuch objections, made by a knowing well diſpoſed people, ſufficient to ſtop the affair, and to proceed to a new election. All this will appear from our Records, and from the nature and ſtrain of the *calls* given in thoſe days. But, according to the act 1732, and the ſenſe now put upon it, let heads of families object what they will againſt the election, if they be not able to prove error or immorality againſt the man by two witneſſes, they muſt receive him as their Paſtor, and ſo the body of the congregation have no greater power or influence in the ſettlement, than thoſe who dwell in another nation. Yea, according to this act, as it is now ſenſed, pariſhes may be ſettled, and ſometimes are, by a majority of non reſiding and diſaffected Heretors, where the whole Elders and People do reclaim and proteſt againſt the ſettlement: And ſurely

ſuch

ſuch ſettlements, as they are againſt ſcripture rules, ſo they are a ſad hindrance and ſtop to the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and cannot but be moſt grieving to all who are zealous for his glory, and who make conſcience of praying, as he directs, "Thy kingdom come: Gird thy ſword upon thy thigh, O moſt Mighty; and in thy Majeſty ride proſperouſly." Upon which account, I do with the greateſt humility and earneſtneſs beſeech and obteſt the Reverend and Honourable Members of the next Aſſembly, to give at leaſt an application of this act, declaring, That it is not the meaning of it to impoſe miniſters upon congregations, where the elderſhip and body of the people do reclaim, not to contradict our Books of Diſcipline and ancient acts of Aſſembly, as the Aſſembly 1586, 1596, 1638, 1649, &c. And I would beg (if I could do it with tears of blood) that they would not make any ſuch act as this, an engine of trouble and perſecution in the Church, ſeeing no man pleads that it is founded upon the word of God, but only that it is deviſed as a proper expedient till the Church be delivered from Patronages. And, about what acts of the Church may miniſters have liberty to ſpeak their minds ſo freely, as about thoſe which are owned to be mere human conſtitutions.

Object. "If Miniſters be diſſatisfied with the acts and Conſtitution of the Church, they ſhould withdraw from her, and give up their legal privileges."

Anſ. 1. Though this be the common talk of ſome, there is no warrant for this courſe in the word of God; for the ſcripture directs us, when we ſee things wrong in the Church, to *plead with our Mother*, but not to diſown her forthwith, or renounce communion with her.

2. Thoſe who talk ſo now, would be moſt ready to accuſe Miniſters, if they did withdraw, of making a ſchiſm and ſeparation without juſt cauſe. What! would they ſay, "Is the Church ſo Heretical, that they will not hold communion with her? are ſuch ſmall miſtakes, juſt grounds of ſeparation? why did they not proteſt againſt what they judged wrong, and continue ſtill within the Church, as ſeveral of our brave anceſtors did in former ages?

Object.

Object. 'They may plead with their mother, but muſt not ſpit in her face.'

Anſw. 1. I am indeed for a decent and reſpectful way of pleading with our mother. 2. If ſome good men ſhall uſe a rougher way of dealing than others, in teſtifying againſt what is wrong, it ought not to be termed a ſpiting in their mother's face, nor made a ground of ſevere cenſure. If our anceſtors, in former ages, had been ſo narrow and rigid in their way of thinking, what had become of Mr Knox, Craig, Davidſon, Welſh, Bruce, the two Melvils, and many others?

Object. 'The Church's Acts muſt be obeyed, her ſentence execute, and the fence of her authority maintained; otherwiſe ſhe cannot be preſerved from the greateſt errors and diſorders. We muſt not ſee the authority of the General Aſſembly ruined.'

Anſw. 1. As for my own part, I was always for maintaining the authority of the General Aſſembly as ſacred and inviolable, ſeeing it is of ſo great conſequence to the preſerving of peace and unity in this church; I have been ſorry to ſee it attacked, or badly uſed; but, if we would truly preſerve it, let us be tender of it, in the making of acts or deciſions; being careful that either they be evidently founded upon the word of God, or, that there be nothing in them contrary thereunto.

2. When any rule is tranſgreſſed which hath nothing but church-authority to ſupport it, church cenſures ſhould be gently uſed, ſeeing rigour in that caſe doth ruin authority more than maintain it: We do not read of any church deſtroyed by her lenity and forbearance in ſuch caſes; though ſeverals have been ruined by screwing up authority too high. We may ſee, by long experience, that ſevere dealing is not the way of convincing men of conſcience and zeal of their miſtakes: and, by the way, it is a little ſurpriſing to ſee ſome, whoſe diſcourſes breathed forth nothing but moderation, peace, charity and benevolence toward their fellow-creatures, all of a ſudden metamorphoſed in their tempers, and breathing forth rigour, ſeverity, perſecution and bitter ſpeeches againſt their brethren who differ from them but a little in their way of thinking. Ah! what poor changeable creatures are we!

3. If we would have the Aſſembly's authority maintained, we muſt take care in making acts of general concern, that none of the Church's fences or guardian rules be broke through, ſuch as that excellent one, Act 9. Aſſemb. 1697, in which, "For the ſafety of the doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline and government of this Church, it is appointed, enacted and declared, that before any General Aſſembly of this Church ſhall paſs any Acts which are to be binding rules and conſtitutions to the Church, the ſame acts be firſt propoſed as overtures to the Aſſembly, and being by them paſt as ſuch, be remitted to the conſideration of the ſeveral Preſbyteries of this Church, and their opinions and conſents reported by their Commiſſioners to the next Aſſembly, who may then paſs the ſame in Acts, if the *more general opinion* (N. B.) *of the Church*, thus had, agree thereunto." Now thus *guardian* Act hath been in force theſe thirty-six years, and hath been regarded as a fundamental rule and bulwark of our happy conſtitution; and, if it be broke through in the making of any act orrule, how can we expect that ſuch an act will be regarded as a binding rule and conſtitution to the Church, legally enacted? and this ſeems to be the caſe with reſpect to Act 1732; for of forty-nine Preſbyteries who gave their opinions concerning it, there were no more than ſix Preſbyteries in all Scotland for it. Some of them indeed were for it with amendments, but generally theſe would have altered the nature of it very much from what it is, had they been gone into.

4. In all ages the wiſeſt ſtates and governments have in many caſes thought fit to relax their authority in cenſuring the diſobedient; and this hath been ſo far from ruining their authority, that it hath contributed to preſerve and eſtabliſh it. How many of the Miniſters of Scotland were guilty of diſobedience to the Aſſembly 1606, at Linlithgow, who appointed them to accept of conſtant moderations; and to the Aſſembly, 1618, who appointed them to receive the Five Articles of Perth? Did ever the Church carry the matter ſo far, as to ſuſpend or depoſe any of the diſobedient brethren? Or, was the authority of the General Aſſembly ruined by ſuch connivance?

connivance? Have we not ſeen many General Aſſemblies ſince that time highly regarded, and their authority in a flouriſhing condition?

After all, I humbly beg, that none may be offended with my freedom in handling theſe matters, ſeeing conſcience hath moved me to it, for the ſafety of my Mother Church, which I ſtand engaged by the ſtrongeſt ties to promote, and which at this juncture I take to be in extreme danger; and in ſuch caſes OMNIS HOMO EST MILES.

I wiſh alſo, for the ſafety and quiet of the Church, that the Diſſents and Proteſtations of Members and Judicatories were allowed to be recorded, with their reaſons. And I ſee not why this might not be allowed under proper regulations, in our ſupreme Eccleſiaſtical Judicatories, as well as in the Houſe of Peers of Great Britain. Why ſhould we think it a greater affront to our authority than they do to theirs? Or, do we pretend to infallibility more than they?

Likewiſe, it would add to the Church's ſafety, that both the numbers and qualifications of Ruling Elders allowed to ſit in Aſſemblies, and Commiſſions, were better regulated, and more narrowly canvaſſed. And many are of opinion, that the expediency of Ruling Elders from Burghs, ſhould of new be taken into ſerious conſideration.

And, I am ſure, it is not much for our ſafety, that national and provincial faſts are ſo much neglected, when Providence ſo loudly calls us to the work of humiliation and prayer; when ſin is arriving to ſo great a height, when clouds of wrath are gathering ſo faſt; when all Europe is threatened with blood and confuſion, and when deſtructive diviſions and ſchiſms are ready to break out among us at home; and O, do not theſe frightful appearances proclaim it to be a proper ſeaſon for us to meet, and faſt, and mourn, and ſee if we can weep our hearts into one lump, and, by our united prayers, prevail with God, for Chriſt's ſake, to 'ſpare his people, and not give his heritage to reproach;' or elſe, that he will prepare us to meet him, when coming in the way of his

judgments? And, if judgment begin at the hou God, what shall be the end of these that obey no gospel? O that God, in his mercy, may awaken time to think on these things! AMEN.

A

SERMON:

On Joel ii. 17.

Let the Priests, the Ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach: that the Heathen ſhould rule over them: wherefore ſhould they ſay among the people, where is their God?

AT this time twenty-one years ago, (viz. October 712.) I opened the Synod, by a Sermon on 1 Sam. iv. 3. concerning Eli's heart 'trembling for the ark of God.' Many of the members of the Synod are removed by eath ſince that time; but thoſe who ſurvive may remember it was a very threatening time to that church; et it pleaſed our gracious God to ſave us from the orm then impending, and allow her many halcyon days nce, though, alas! badly improven: Wherefore the louds seem to gather again, and look very black; and new ſtorm from another quarter (if God prevent not) s ready to blow. I have choſen therefore this text, hich calls us for more than trembling hearts for the rk, even weeping eyes, and praying lips alſo; and O hat all theſe might meet in us at this time!

In Joel's time, the church and people of God were hreatened with a deſolating judgement: to prevent it, he alls them to public national faſting and humiliation; duties

duties most proper for a people expoſed to public national calamities. In the text, we have directions given to miniſters for carrying on this work; in which let us

Obſerve, 1. The perſons addreſſed, the prieſts or miniſters of God; Why? because they, who were the people's mouth to God, upon other occaſions, were eſpecially called at this time, to ſtand in the open, to turn away God's wrath from the church. Though others are not exempted from his duty, yet it is the buſineſs of miniſters, in a ſpecial manner, Joel i. 13. 'Lie all night in ſackcloth, ye miniſters of my God.' When others mourn in the day, it is your duty to mourn both night and day.

2. Obſerve the place where they are to mourn and wreſtle; 'betwixt the porch and the altar;' that is, the ſtately porch built by Solomon, and the great brazen altar, the public place where they uſed to attend the offering of ſacrifices; there they are to pour out their tears and prayers in view of all the people, that, by the miniſter's example, the people may be affected and wrought into the like pious diſpoſition.

3. Obſerve the words the miniſters are directed to uſe and enlarge upon in their prayers to God; 'Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, &c. In which there are ſeveral ſtrong arguments uſed to prevail with God for the church:

1*ſt*, They are to cry, 'Spare, O Lord;' *q. d.* 'We confeſs our guilt and ill deſervings; we acknowledge the juſtice of thy proceedings, though we ſhould be cut off; all our relief is in thy ſparing mercy, and this we humbly look up to, and plead for, with a merciful God.'

2*dly*, Another plea is taken from the relation they ſtood in unto God; 'We are thy people, thine heritage:' 'We are the people thou haſt ſet thy love upon, ſeparated from thy church, taken into covenant with thee, ranſomed from Egyptian bondage, delivered from many enemies and dangers, and preſerved from ruin by a train of miraculous providences; Lord, ſpare the inheritances thou haſt purchaſed for thyſelf at ſo dear a rate.'

3*dly*,

3*dly*, They are to plead the reproach and contempt which would fall upon the church and people of God, if God give up with them; 'Give not up thine heritage to reproach;' *q. d.* If thou ſend a famine upon us, (which was the judgment immediately threatened) then the fruitful land of Canaan, the glory of all lands, ſhall be reproached as a poor beggarly and barren land, inſufficient to afford ſacrifices for the temple; yea, we ſhall ſoon fall under the reproach of ſervitude to our Heathen neighbours, who will make an eaſy prey of us, if once we be famiſhed, and deprive us both of our civil and ſpiritual liberties, and eſpecially of God's ordinances, the ſymbols of his preſence, and means of communion with him; which we value as our great honour and happineſs above other nations.'

Laſtly, They are to plead in prayer, that the reproach of the church will ſome way reflect upon her God and protector; 'Wherefore ſhould they ſay among the people, where is their God? *q d.* 'Theſe barbarous people, who watched for our halting, will not conſider our ſins and ill-deſervings at God's hand, but will talk reproachfully of God, ſaying, Where is the God they truſted in, the God of whoſe power, mercy, and faithfulneſs, they boaſted ſo much? They will ſay, He is either weak, and could not help them in their extremity, or unkind, and would not: Lord, ſpare and pity the church, for thy name, thy glory's ſake. The maſter of our reproach is not ſo great; but, Lord, What wilt thou do for thy great name?'

Doct. *In time of the church's danger, miniſters are eſpecially called to mourn plead, and wreſtle with God for her, that ſhe may not be abandoned or given up to reproach.*

In proſecuting this ſubject, I propoſed to ſhew,

1*ſt*, When it may be ſaid, that a church is left or given up to reproach.

2*dly*, Why miniſters ſhould be ſo earneſt with God to prevent this calamity.

3*dly*, Make improvement ſuitable to the caſe of the church.

I. The firſt head is, to ſhew when a church may be ſaid to be left or given up to reproach and contempt.

And here I ſhall mention ſeveral reproachful and church expoſing evils, which miniſters ought mournfully and fervently to deprecate, eſpecially when a church is threatened with them. As,

1*ſt*, When a church falls into a backſliding condition, religion in her is under a viſible decay; her members leave their firſt love, degenerate from their predeceſſors piety and zeal, turn looſe and indifferent about God's truths, their former declared principles, and the ſolemn engagements they lie under to maintain them; and not only ſo, but turn careleſs alſo about the practice and duties of religion, ſuch as family-worſhip, ſecret prayer, ſabbath-ſanctification, and goſpel holineſs: when people loſe their former ſpirituality and livelineſs in God's ſervice, and their duties dwindle away into a dead formality: when they content themſelves with external ordinances and communions, without communion with God in them: when they turn carnal in their converſation; Chriſtian love declines, malice, hatred and envy do increaſe: then it is, that a church is left and given up to reproach; theſe are church diſgracing evils, which miniſters ſhould earneſtly deprecate, and cry, 'Spare,'

2*dly*, When deſtructive ſchiſms and diviſions invade a church, ſo that good men, both miniſters and profeſſors of religion, entertain rough thoughts, and break out into uncharitable reflections, and ſevere cenſures one againſt another, and will not uſe lenity or forbearance to them who differ from them in ſome leſſer things. Theſe are evils we ſhould earneſtly pray againſt, ſeeing they manifeſtly tend to expoſe and ruin a church; for they put a ſtop to the progreſs of the goſpel, the converſion of ſouls, and in bringing of ſtrangers to Chriſt: they hinder the ſweet fellowſhip of Chriſtians together, and their mutual prayers with and for one another; and open a flood-gate for innumerable other evils: as, for inſtance, they take us off from the vitals and eſſentials of

n, the life and power of godlineſs; and, in the reof, engage and employ us into many needleſs paſſionate ſtrivings, envious whiſperſ, unbackbitings, and revengeful actions. How ſad- d do we find that word of the Apoſtle James Where envying and ſtrife is, there is confuſion, y evil work!' We have reaſon to plead and cry his woful ſpirit of ſtrife and contention; for, doth take place, the church's beſt friend is ovoked, the 'Prince of peace;' and ſhe herſelf xpoſed to the ſcorn and deriſion of her enemies. It is moſt reproachful to a church, when doc- ors creep into her, when her teachers begin to m the pure truths of God handed down to d vent doctrines which have a tendency to Ar- n, Arianiſm or Deiſm; when they extol natu- n more than revelation, the power of corrupt ore than efficacious free grace, mens own mo- rmances more than imputed righteouſneſs, Je- t as a pattern more than as a propitiation; or r opinions which tend to ſap the foundation of ity, or reproach the holy Spirit's operations, of faith, with the name of enthuſiaſm: theſe ch-expoſing evils, which we ought to bewail againſt.

It is reproachful to a church, when ſhe is ſmit- barrenneſs and unfruitfulneſs, with reſpect to g of ſouls, and bringing forth children to God: e great doctrine of regeneration and the new- ittle preached or experienced in her; or, when nent ſhe hath given her a *miſcarying womb and s.* 'Lord, ſpare thy people, and give not thine to this reproach.'

It is a church-diſgracing evil, when God with- is holy Spirit and his gracious influences from ſters and teachers, in any meaſure or degree: h there are many, and each of them is to be and deprecated by us. As, *1ſt*, When we are of the gifts and qualifications we once had. hen the light and knowledge we retain, hath no on our conſciences. *3dly*, When we loſe our

ſpirituality and livelineſs in the worſhip and ſervice of God. *4thly*, When we are ſtraitned in our approaches to God. *5thly*, When we begin to think duty a weariſomneſs, and our hearts are alienated from it. *6thly*, When heart-plagues and indwelling corruptions prevail and increaſe, as heart-atheiſm, unbelief, carnality, &c. *7thly*, When we incline towards the temptations of ſin and ſociety of ungodly men. *8thly*, When wonted reſtraints are taken off, and we turn looſe and profane in our lives, ſo as (like Eli's ſons) to tempt men to abhor the offerings of the Lord. " O Lord, ſpare thy people, and give not thy church to this reproach."

6thly, It is reproachful to the Lord's vineyard, when breaches are made in her walls and fences, ſo that her enemies, the foxes and wild beaſts, break in, and ſpoil the vines: when ſtrangers do devour her ſtrength, thoſe of a different perſuaſion and communion do ſpoil her of her ancient rights and liberties: when patrons and their abettors thruſt in paſtors upon Chriſtian congregations againſt their will, whereby God's ordinances are deſerted, the miniſtry is contemned, the Lord's day is profaned, the flock of Chriſt is ſcattered and expoſed as a prey to ſeducers. Theſe are evils we ſhould bewail and pray againſt with tears, crying, " Lord, ſpare thy church, and give her not up to this reproach."

7thly, It is diſgracing to a church, when God hides his face from her, when under oppreſſion and diſtreſs, and covers himſelf with a cloud, that their prayers cannot paſs through; ſo that enemies are ready to ſay, as in the text, ' Where is their God?' ' Where is the fruit of all your prayers? where is he in whom you truſted for help? where is your covenanted God, of whoſe promiſes to relieve you in trouble, you were wont to boaſt? This reproach is as a ſword in his peoples bones, Pſal xlii 10. againſt which let us pray, ' Lord, ſpare thy people, and give not thine heritage to this ſad reproach.

8thly, It doth ſadly expoſe a church, when her pillars are removed; when thoſe are diſcouraged or taken away who were wont to weep and wreſtle between the porch and the altar, and ſtood in the breach to keep off wrath from her; when her burning and ſhining lights are extinguiſhed

tinguiſhed; the precious ſons of Zion are thrown by as earthen pitchers; when faithful teachers are removed into corners or graves, and ſuch put in their room, who are unexperienced in religion, harden people in their ſins, or lull them aſleep in a Chriſtleſs and unregenerate ſtate.

It is diſtreſſing to a church, when her pillars are ſtruck at, perſecution is intended againſt the champions of Chriſt's cauſe, whereby others are intimidated with fear to own it. How low was the church brought in Herod's time, Acts xii. when James was killed with the ſword, Peter in priſon ready to be executed, and all the reſt of the apoſtles were deſigned as a ſacrifice? then the pillars ſhook, the diſciples trembled, and the enemies triumphed. This was a time of reproach; and it becomes all the miniſters of the Lord to weep between the porch and the altar, and cry, 'Spare thy people, O Lord, give not thine heritage to this reproach, or any other church-diſgracing evil.'

II. The *Second* head I propoſed, was, to ſhew why miniſters ſhould be ſo earneſt with God, to avert theſe church-expoſing evils. Reaſons for it.

1. Becauſe God expreſsly requires this at their hand, as in the text, and alſo in Iſa. lxii. 6, 7. 'I have ſet watchmen upon thy walls, O Jeruſalem,——Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not ſilence. And give him no reſt, till he eſtabliſh Jeruſalem.' Where we may ſee the great end for which God ſets miniſters in ſuch public poſts; it is not to keep ſilence in an evil time, as other prudent men may do, but to ſpeak aloud in Zion's behalf, and to interceed and wreſtle with God for her. And we ſee God requires faithfulneſs in this matter.

2. This hath been the approven practice of the Lord's prophets and miniſters in all ages. How earneſt was Moſes, in wreſtling and pleading for the church in his day! Exod. xxvii. 11, 12, 13. 'And Moſes beſought the Lord his God, and ſaid, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot againſt thy people, which thou haſt brought forth out of the land of Egypt, with great power and a mighty hand? Wherefore ſhould the Egyptians ſpeak, and ſay, For miſchief did he bring them out, to ſlay them in the

mountains, and conſume them from the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath and repent of this evil againſt thy people. Remember Abraham, Iſaac and Iſrael thy ſervants, to whom thou ſweareſt,' &c. Here is an interceſſory prayer for Iſrael, full of the moſt powerful arguments, worthy of our imitation. In like manner was the Prophet Samuel employed for the church in his time, 1 Sam. xii. 23. 'As for me (ſaith he) God forbid that I ſhould ſin againſt the Lord, in ceaſing to pray for you.' So the prophet David wreſtled for the church, Pſal. xiv. 7. 'O that the ſalvation of Iſrael were come out of Zion!' Pſal. xxv 22. 'Redeem Iſrael, O God, out of all his troubles.' Pſal. li. 18. 'Do good in thy good pleaſure unto Zion, build thou the walls of Jeruſalem.' So Aſaph, Pſal. lxxx. 14. 'Return, we beſeech thee, O God of hoſts: look down from heaven, and viſit this vine,' &c. Likewiſe the prophet Iſaiah was thus concerned, Iſa. lxii. 1. 'For Zion's ſake will I not hold my peace, and for Jeruſalem's ſake will I not reſt, until the righteouſneſs thereof go forth as brightneſs, and the ſalvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.' And ſo the prophet Daniel wreſtled fervently for the church, Dan. ix. 16. 17, 18, 19. So did Nehemiah, Neh. i. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, &c. And ſo did the apoſtle Paul, Rom. i. 9. and x. 1. Eph. i. 16, 17. But I have a greater pattern to lay before you than all theſe, even that of the Angel of the Covenant, the great Prophet and Teacher of the church, Zech. i. 12. How earneſtly doth he plead for the church in diſtreſs?' O Lord of hoſts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jeruſalem, and the cities of Judah, againſt which thou haſt had indignation theſe ſeventy years?' Let us imitate him.

3 Becauſe God is exceedingly delighted with ſuch pleadings, and allows great familiarity to thoſe who interceed for his church, Iſa. xlv. 11. and promiſeth proſperity to them, Pſal. cxxii. 6.

4. Miniſters ſhould be more earneſt for the church in trouble than other men, becauſe they are Chriſt's principal ſervants, who ſhould be more zealous for their glorious Maſter than others, and know beſt the near relation the church ſtands in to him, that ſhe is his city, his houſe;

, his heritage, his ſpouſe, his body, and the pur- of his blood. And therefore miniſters, for their r's ſake, ſhould interpoſe with the greateſt earneſt- or the church.

Becauſe miniſters are, by their office, bound to more compaſſion than others to precious ſouls, I cannot miſs to be in a miſerable ſituation, when hurch is diſtreſſed with ſpiritual judgments, as the lrawing of the Spirit from ordinances, and the e of dry breaſts.

Becauſe at ſuch a time the ſouls of miniſters are o ſuffer, as well as others; for the church, being nother of us all; if it be ill with her, and her con- ı ſickly and pining, our ſouls muſt languiſh with mens.

Becauſe miniſters ſhould beſt know the hazard of ; ſilent and unconcerned about the church's danger rouble; ſeeing there is a heavy wo denounced a- t them, 'who are at eaſe in Zion, and are not ed for the affliction of Joſeph,' Amos vi. 1. 6. they know what wrath was threatened againſt r, if ſhe did keep ſilence when the church was in er, Eſther iv. 14. 'For if thou altogether hold eace at this time, then ſhall enlargement and de- ance ariſe to the Jews from another place, but and thy father's houſe ſhall be deſtroyed.

HEAD III.——*The Improvement.*

rſt Uſe may be of Lamentation, upon the account of ſilence and unconcernedneſs who are miniſters about hurch of God when in danger and diſtreſs. Ah! few are there among us of Eli's diſpoſition this day, ſe hearts are trembling for the ark of God! How weeping between the porch and the altar, and cry- 'Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine ritance to reproach!' Witneſs the unfrequency of days, and the cold entertainment given to motions bſerving them. What! is it a time for ſilence and ieſs, when the affairs of Zion are in ſuch a melan-

choly

choly ſituation both at home and abroad? Is it time for us to dwell at eaſe in our ceiled houſes, when the Lord's houſe is threatened to be laid waſte by our woful backſlidings, and deſtructive diviſions? Is it becoming the character of Chriſt's ambaſſadors, to ſhew an indifferency anent his church's danger, and to act the part of a Heathen Gallio, to care for none of theſe things? O what cauſe have we to bewail the caſe of thoſe, who can be eaſy about the public intereſt of the church, if it go well with their own private affairs; who care not, if they can ſwim in proſperity, though the church be drowned in tears and blood! What is this! but to be like the king and Hamon, who ſat down to drink when the city Shuſhan was perplexed, Eſther iii. 15. For a Chriſtian miniſter to mind his private concerns, and neglect the public, is as great folly, as if a ſailor in a ſtorm ſhould notice only his private cheſt, and neglect the veſſel in which he and his effects are embarked. It is recorded, as a praiſe-worthy action, and a noble evidence of a public ſpirit in one Terentius, a captain under the emperor Valens, who, having done ſome ſpecial ſervice to the emperor, for which he judged him worthy of an eminent reward, he bid him aſk what he would have, and it ſhould be granted. Whereupon, after an adviſement, he wrote a petition to the emperor, That the Orthodox Chriſtians might have liberty of a church by themſelves, where they might worſhip God ſeparately from the Arians. The emperor being Arian himſelf, was much offended with the petition, tore it in pieces, and threw it away, bidding the captain aſk ſomething for himſelf: but he carefully gathering up the pieces of his torn petition, ſaid, If he could not be heard in Chriſt's cauſe, he would aſk nothing for himſelf. Alas! that we, who are Chriſt's miniſters, ſhould fall ſo much ſhort of this ſoldier in concern for Chriſt's intereſt!

But the beſt improvement we can make of this doctrine is for amendment; and therefore I ſhall proceed to a

Second Uſe of Exhortation. And here, my dear brethren, ſuffer

ffer me to be your humble remembrancer, and my wn monitor: and the duty exhorted to, is, that I have een inſiſting upon from the text, weep and pray for ll the churches of God that are in diſtreſs, and eſpeially the church of Scotland, our mother church, hich at this day is in danger of being torn in pieces nd deſtroyed, if God in his mercy do not prevent it. O let us cry with all our might, 'Lord, ſpare thy people, and give not thine heritage (in Scotland) to reproach: wherefore ſhall they ſay among the people, here is their God?' And, for your encouragement to wreſtle and plead with God in her behalf, let me offer theſe conſiderations;

1. Such pleadings are moſt acceptable to God, and prevalent with him. Who are they but the wreſtlers that deliver the church, and preſerve the iſland?

2. Thoſe who are moſt concerned for the church in danger, ſhall have the greateſt ſhare in her comforts when God reſcues her. They who ſow moſt of the ſeed of tears for Zion, ſhall reap moſt of her joys, when the harveſt comes.

3. We have noble arguments to make uſe of in pleading with God for this poor church, as well as they had of old, for Iſrael.

As, (1.) The compaſſion of his nature, which hath often interpoſed for this church, when he ſeemed to have given her up. So was it in the caſe of Iſrael, Judg. x. 14. where God appeared to reject them, and bid them, 'Go cry to the gods they had choſen, and let theſe deliver them in the time of their trouble;' yet when Iſrael perſiſted in crying for pity, it is ſaid, v. 16. 'His ſoul was grieved for the miſery of Iſrael, and he delivered them.'

(2.) We may plead the glory of his name, as of old, Jer. xiv. 21. 'Lord, do not diſgrace the throne of thy glory,' *viz.* the temple where thy glory is diſplayed: *q. d.* 'Lord, we deſerve to have diſgrace put upon us; but let O it be in ſuch a way, that the diſgrace may not reflect upon thyſelf, upon thy worſhip, thy ordinances, thy attributes, thy promiſes. Let not our enemies have occaſion to reproach thy name, or to

ſay,

ſay, *where is now their God?* Where is the God they always boaſted of, as ſuperior to all the gods of the nations?' So may we ſay, 'Lord, do for thy own name's ſake; it is no great matter what become of the miniſters or profeſſors of Scotland; but what wilt thou do for thy great name, that may come ſome way to ſuffer with them? Lord, what will the Egyptians ſay?' Exod. xxxii.

(3.) We may plead his covenant with us, as they did, Jer. xiv. 21. *Lord, remember and break not covenant with us.* Though we have broke to thee, Lord, do not thou break to us. We are a people in covenant with thee more explicitly than other nations; we are a land peculiarly given to Chriſt by the father's donation, as being amongſt the ends and uttermoſt parts of the earth, and among the iſles, which have ſeen his ſalvation, and waited for his law; we are a land moſt ſolemnly devoted to God by our reforming anceſtors, who, in a national way, avouched the Lord to be their God; and at the ſame time gave up themſelves and their poſterity to the Lord; and thou, Lord, didſt declare thyſelf well pleaſed with the bargain, thou didſt fill the temple with thy glory, work great deliverance for us, and raiſe up ſaviours unto us, when we were brought very low. O do not now forſake thine inheritance!

DIRECTIONS.

I proceed, in the next place, with all humility, to offer ſome advices proper for miniſters of the goſpel, relative to this ſubject: and, that I may the better reach them, I ſhall propoſe and anſwer ſome queſtions.

Queſt. 1. 'What things ſhall we pray for at this time unto this church, for preventing her reproach, retrieving her credit, and promoting her welfare?'

Anſw. 1. Let us pray for a ſpirit of repentance, mourning and ſupplication, to all ranks among us, that we may all be diſpoſed to humble ourſelves before the Lord, and mournfully to bewail our ſins, our backſlidings and defections, which have provoked God to withdraw

draw from us, and threaten to give us up to reproach. O that Scotland were brought to the temper of penitent returning Iſrael, 1 Sam. vii. 2. where it is ſaid, that 'all Iſrael lamented after the Lord!' Were all hearts moved in a penitent manner to come and lament after a departing God, it would be a hopeful token for the land.

2. Let us pray for God's pouring out his Spirit from on high upon the ordinances and aſſemblies of this land, for convincing, enlightening, and converting of ſouls to the Lord: For our affairs will never take a turn to the better, 'until the Spirit be poured out from on high,' Iſa. xxxii. 15: Till then, our wilderneſs will not be turned to a fruitful field. Well, then, let us all pray for a time when goſpel-ordinances, diſpenſed by us, ſhall be remarkably backed by God's power and preſence; for a time when, by the effuſion of the Spirit, a great and effectual door ſhall be opened to us, as was to Paul at Epheſus, 1 Cor. xvi. 9. 'a door of utterance' opened in miniſters mouths, and a door of entrance in ſinners hearts; a time when miniſters minds ſhall be enlightened, their hearts warmed, memories ſtrengthened, and tongues looſed; ſo that they ſhall have a great facility in uttering their thoughts; 'their hearts ſhall indite a good matter, and their tongues be as the pen of a ready writer.' Let us pray for the time when miniſters mouths ſhall be opened, and hearers appetites ſharpened; when miniſters hearts ſhall be enlarged, and hearers hearts melted; when the arrows of the word ſhall be directed by a powerful hand, to pierce the conſciences of men, and they brought thereby to make ſerious enquiries about their eternal ſtate, 'What muſt we do to be ſaved?' This would retrieve our credit.

3. Let us pray earneſtly for the down-pouring of the Spirit upon young ſtudents and expectants of the holy miniſtry, That God may make them acquainted with regeneration-word in their younger years, and raiſe up amongſt them eminent inſtruments of his glory; make them burning and ſhining lights, men of public ſpirits, who will deſire to ſpend and be ſpent for the glory of

Chriſt and winning of ſouls; men that will preſer Jeruſalem to their chiefeſt joy; men that will be ſuitably weighted with the work they are undertaking, and concerned to be cleared about their having God's call to it; men that will not ruſh forwardly upon the work, have an active hand in thruſting themſelves into the vineyard, and ſo run unſent, but wait patiently till God clear their way. O that God would raiſe up ſuch a miniſtry in Scotland for the next age! O that he would ſend ſuch labourers into his harveſt! This would prevent our reproach, and retrieve our credit.

4 Let us pray for the continuance of the purity of doctrine and worſhip in the land, that God may preſerve us from deiſm, and whatever hath a tendency thereto; and from all Popiſh, Socinian, or Arian errors; and that he may deliver us from all Pelagian and Arminian tenets and opinions; that ſo men may ſee and acknowledge God in every thing; whereas Pelagians and Arminians ſcarce ſee God in any thing, but make man himſelf (as it were) a God, by aſcribing all to his natural powers, and making him independent with reſpect to his converſion and ſpiritual performances. O what a reproach would it be to us, if ſuch errors ſhould prevail among us!

5 Let us pray for the preſervation of the peace and unity of this church, and that our breaches may all be healed, and greater breaches prevented; that God may pity us in our preſent ſituation, and raiſe up peace-makers amongſt us; that he may inſpire all the miniſters of this church with a ſpirit of meekneſs, charity, and forbearance towards their brethren, who cannot attain to the ſame light with them in ſome leſſer matters; and that he may deliver us from a ſpirit of bitterneſs, malice, or perſecution, againſt our brethren. O how monſtrous and reproachful will it be, for thoſe who bear the character of Chriſt's lambs and doves, to fall a-biting and tearing one another, like lions and beaſts of prey!

6. Let us pray for the removing of all theſe things which are the cauſes of diviſion and contention among us; and, particularly, for deliverance from all ſpiritual oppreſſion,

oppreſſion, and encroachments upon the rights and liberties of this church, by patrons or others, that ſo congregations may be ſupplied with paſtors with the conſent and good-liking of the members thereof; this would contribute much for our welfare, and prevent our reproach.

7. Let us pray, that God would pour out a ſpirit of reformation, and of zeal for piety, and againſt all manner of ſin and vice, upon all ranks of perſons amongſt us; ſuch as magiſtrates, miniſters, elders, heads of families, parents, and teachers of youth; ſo that every perſon, in their reſpective ſtations, may vigouroufly exert themſelves for ſuppreſſing ſin, and recommending the exerciſe of godlineſs amongſt thoſe committed to their charge: And hereby the credit and proſperity of the church would be greatly promoted.

Queſt. 2. How is it that we muſt pray for the church, ſo as to prevail?

Anſ. 1. 'Let us prav in faith,' Jam i. 6. believing that God is infinite in power, and able to help; full of compaſſion, and ready to help; and depending entirely upon the merits and mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, for acceptance in our prayers. 2. Let us pray with fervency, like Jacob, who wreſtled with God, when he prayed. Let us, by importunate addreſſes, beſiege heaven with holy violence; and, like Samſon, let us bow ourſelves with all our might, in order to pull down the pillars of Dagon's temple. 3. Let us join penitent tears with our fervent prayers; for, in the text, we find weeping and praying linked together; Alſo the famous wreſtler Jacob 'wept and made ſupplication,' when he prevailed with the angel, Hoſ. xii. 4. 4. Let us pray in an argumentative manner, when we plead with God for his church: Let us fill our mouths with arguments, as in the text, and as Moſes did, Exod. xxxii. 11, 12, 13. 5. Let us pray with perſeverance, as we are directed, Eph vi. 18. Rom. xii. 12. 'Hold not your peace, give him no reſt,' ſaith the prophet, Iſa. lxii. 1, 6, 7. 6. Let our prayers be joined with a diligent uſe of the means, to obtain the favours we

ask: As idle beggars are not welcome to man's door ſo neither are they to God's. And this leads to

Queſt. 3. What are thoſe means and endeavours proper to be uſed by us, in conjunction with our prayers in order to obtain the credit and proſperity of the church, and to prevent her reproach?

Anſ. I deſire, in the humbleſt manner, to offer theſe following to my brethren's conſideration:

1. Let us all endeavour to be like the well-furniſhed ſcribe, that bringeth forth out of his treaſure, 'things both new and old,' *i. e.* Let us ſtudy to furniſhed with a ſtock of neceſſary and uſeful knowledge, that we may bring forth variety of proviſion for the entertainment of our peoples ſouls: 'The prieſts lips ſhould preſerve knowledge.' In the *1ſt* place, Let us all be well-ſkilled in ſcripture-knowledge, in the knowledge of God and his perfections, and of the myſtery of the Trinity, ſo far as revealed, and of Jeſus Chriſt, our ſurety and ſacrifice. Likewiſe, we need the knowledge of human arts and ſciences, and of the languages; and eſpecially thoſe in which the holy bible was firſt written: This knowledge is a good handmaid to divinity and ſcripture-knowledge; and, for acquiring theſe, we ought to have nurſeries of learning, and ſchools of the prophets, as in ancient ages.

There is a ſect lately riſen among us, who decry ſuch knowledge as unneceſſary for goſpel-miniſters, and therefore make choice of illiterate men for that office. But, if the devil ſhould ſtir up Arians, Socinians, Deiſts, or others, to make an attack upon our holy religion, what could ſuch men do to defend it? If Rome ſhould ſend her ſubtile Jeſuits and learned prieſts among us, to ſubvert the Proteſtant doctrines, and miſlead our people, how would theſe unlearned preachers be able to maintain them, and diſcover the fallacies of their arguments?

Object. O (ſay they) we have the word to oppoſe them.

Anſ. 1ſt. Had there not been men of learning before you to have tranſlated it, you even would not have had that. *2dly*, Put the beſt ſword ever was, in the hand of one that

hat wants ſkill to uſe it, he could not thereby defend himſelf againſt him that is expert in the art of fencing. When the cunning Jeſuit ſhall allege, The paſſage you quote is not juſtly tranſlated, what would you anſwer him? It hath been judiciouſly obſerved, by the authors of our eccleſiaſtic hiſtories, that the bloody emperor Dioclefian did not ſo much miſchief to the church and her miniſters, as the emperor Julian the apoſtate did. The firſt, indeed, put many of them to death; but the devil learned Julian another way, viz. to take away the maintenance of miniſters, and put down their ſchools of learning; and hereby Julian did the greateſt damage of the two: For, though Dioclefian took many eminent men away, there ſtill aroſe others in their ſtead; but the robbing of miniſters and ſchools of learning, of their maintenance and revenues, did hinder a ſucceſſion of able miniſters in the church. And ſhall any lover of Zion join iſſue with that infamous apoſtate? Let young preachers and expectants remember this, that they may diligently improve their excellent opportunities in furniſhing themſelves with the knowledge of the languages, hiſtory, philoſophy, mathematics, geography, aſtronomy, and polemic divinity, which are good handmaids to ſcripture-knowledge: And this would be one way to promote the welfare of this church, and prevent her reproach; for, an ignorant miniſtry is a reproach to any church.

II. Let all of us ſtudy, in a ſpecial manner, to be found among theſe who deſerve the character of able miniſters of the New Teſtament, mentioned by the apoſtle, 2 Cor. iii. 6. *Queſt.* Who is it that may be denominated an able miniſter of the New Teſtament? *Anſ.* He is one that is well ſkilled in the myſtery o Chriſt, and him crucified; that knows how to open up the covenant of grace, and the method of our juſtification by Jeſus Chriſt, and his righteouſneſs only. He makes it his main buſineſs to hold forth the excellency and uſefulneſs of Chriſt, both for our juſtification and ſanctification. He looks upon Jeſus Chriſt as the Chriſtian's great ſurety and ſacrifice, and alſo as his

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head of influence, his life, and that 'without Chriſt we can do nothing:' And, therefore, he makes it the great end of his ſermons to exalt Chriſt, and free grace diſplayed through him; to preach up Chriſt. and preach down *ſelf*; to make Chriſt *all*, and ſelf *nothing*: And, whether he preach duties or privileges, threatenings or promiſes, the tendency of all is to lead ſinners from a covenant of works to a covenant of grace, from ſelf to Chriſt. Again, this New-Teſtament miniſter, not only preached up the excellency of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and of faith therein, for our ſalvation; but he alſo inſiſts upon the neceſſity of repentance for ſin, and reformation from it: He preſſes the practice of holineſs and all moral duties, to complete the character of a true Chriſtian: He aſſures all his hearers, that 'without holineſs no man can ſee God;' ſeeing it is impoſſible a man can be a good Chriſtian (profeſs what he will) unleſs he be a good moraliſt; he muſt mind the ſecond table duties as well as the firſt; he muſt not only attend divine worſhip, but he muſt be ſober, honeſt, chaſte, meek, juſt, merciful, charitable, and beneficent, minding his neighbour's intereſt as well as his own; and in theſe things following the example of the holy Jeſus, his Lord and pattern. But then, the New-Teſtament miniſter is concerned that mens morals be of the right ſtamp; that they be Chriſtian morals, and of the ſame nature with goſpel-holineſs or ſanctification; and, in order thereto, he directs men to Jeſus Chriſt, the treaſure and fountain of grace and holineſs, the fountain of ſanctification as well as of juſtification. Morality, performed in the ſtrength of nature, is ſtill ſour fruit, and can never pleaſe God, till it ſpring from Chriſt as the root; unregenerate morality, however far men advance in it, is ſtill but nature at beſt. The heart muſt be renewed, and the ſoul united to Chriſt, before morality can be refined into goſpel-holineſs, and moral virtues commence Chriſtian graces. The goſpel miniſter teacheth, that all acceptable morality, all true grace or holineſs, is the proper reſult of the ſoul's union with the holy Jeſus, our living head, who is the firſt and immediate receptacle of the holy Spirit, and

of

all ſanctifying influences for the uſe of his members; d out of his fullneſs we muſt by faith receive thoſe al and quickening influences neceſſary for promoting nctification in us. And, O how much would it be for e credit and intereſt of this and every Chriſtian urch, to be duly provided with ſuch able miniſters of e New Teſtament!

III. Let us be diligent in inſtructing our people in e knowledge of the firſt principles of Chriſtianity, and pecially in catechiſing of the youth. The moſt fa-ous of the ancient Fathers have gloried in their being atechiſts. This is a moſt neceſſary part of our work: or, if the foundations of knowledge be not carefully id among our people, our ſucceſs muſt be marred; e beſt ſermons will be loſt upon them, if ignorance revail among them. And, ſeeing youth is the mould-g age, and the proper ſeaſon for receiving inſtruction, e ought to improve it well, by frequent and diligent atechiſing. A veſſel will long retain the ſcent of that ith which it is firſt ſeaſoned; ſo perſons are more eady to retain good impreſſions made upon them in the me of youth, than afterwards. Let us look upon the oung as the ſeed of the next generation, as the lambs f the flock, towards whom a ſpecial care and tender-eſs is to be expreſſed. The firſt charge Chriſt gave o Peter, was, 'to feed his lambs,' the young and eak of the flock. This is the moſt uſual ſeaſon of onverſion, the time when the heart is ſooneſt melted, nd the affections are the moſt pliable; and, if ever we revail with ſinners, youth is the moſt likely time for t. And, therefore, let us have a tender care of the oung in our congregations, and more eſpecially at their irſt admiſſion to the Lord's table: This is the time of heir renewing their baptiſmal covenant, their becom-ng Chriſtians by their own voluntary choice, as well s by their parents dedication; the time of their enter-ng into the adult ſtate of church-members; the time f laying the foundation-ſtone of their ſpiritual build-ng, their ſoul's ſalvation: And, therefore, it ſhould be one with deliberation, holy ſkill, and deep digging, by humiliation,

humiliation, repentance, ſelf-ſearching, renouncing ſelf-righteouſneſs, and removing all falſe foundations, till they win to the rock Chriſt, and his moſt perfect righteouſneſs, as the only ground of their juſtification and acceptance at God's bar. And this being ſuch a critical time for their ſouls, we ought, according to the aſſembly's direction, diligently to inſtruct them before their firſt admiſſion to the Lord's Supper, particularly as to the covenant of grace, and the articles thereof; and take them ſolemnly engaged thereunto, and that in a more expreſs way than we did their fathers at their baptiſm. Let us put ſuch queſtions to them as theſe, and wait for their anſwers:

1. Q. What ſenſe have you of your miſery by nature, and while under the covenant of works?

2. Q. Do you ſee the need you ſtand in of the Mediator's help to relieve you out of this ſtate?

3. Q. Are you ſenſible of your breaking your baptiſmal engagements, by running away from Chriſt your Captain, going over to the devil's camp, and ſtanding long out againſt Chriſt's calls?

4. Q. Are you deſirous to return unto the Lord, as penitent prodigals, and mourning backſliders, with your face Zion-wards, weeping as ye go, willing to renew your baptiſmal vows, ſaying, 'Come, let us join ourſelves to the Lord in an everlaſting covenant, never to be forgotten?'

5. Q. Are you content to break with the trinity of hell, and engage with the Trinity of heaven! *i.e.* Are you content to renounce the world, the devil, and the fleſh; and to accept of God the father as your father, God the Son as your redeemer, and God the Holy Ghoſt as your ſanctifier, in whoſe name ye are baptized?

6. Q. Do you admire redeeming love in the Son of God, his undertaking to be a ſurety and ſacrifice for the race of fallen Adam, when he paſt by fallen angels?

7. Q. Do you heartily approve of this excellent contrivance and goſpel-method of ſalvation thro' the ſuretyſhip and ſanctification of Jeſus Chriſt? Do ye think this a device worthy of God, and of infinite wiſdom?

8. Q.

8. Q. Are you therefore willing to renounce your own righteouſneſs and ſtrength, as inſufficient to anſwer the demands of the law, and to accept of a ſurety for both, and ſay, 'in the Lord Jeſus I have righteouſneſs and ſtrength;' I am willing to make uſe of a borrowed ſtrength for my performing of duty, and of a borrowed righteouſneſs for my acceptance in duty?

9. Q. Are you willing to go in to this ſelf-denying method of ſalvation; and are you well pleaſed with it, as it tends to make you eternal debters to free grace, excludes all glorying and boaſting in the creature, and aſcribes all the glory of your ſalvation to Chriſt only; takes the crown off the head of *ſelf*, and puts it on the head of Chriſt?

10. Q. Are you content to accept of Jeſus Chriſt, the mediator betwixt God and man, in all his offices; as a prophet, to inſtruct and teach you; as a prieſt, to atone and intercede for you; and as a King, to rule in and over you?

11. Q. Are you content to take Chriſt as a King to govern you by his laws, as well as a prieſt to ſave you by his blood? Are you deſirous he ſhould come in as a king to execute his kingly office in your ſoul, to ſet up his throne in your heart, and ſubdue all indwelling ſin, and to conquer all your luſts and corruptions?

12. Q. Do you look on your ſins as the enemies and crucifiers of Chriſt? And do you reſolve, through his grace, to throw out every one of them, and to harbour none of theſe murderers; and to give no houſe-room nor heart-room to the leaſt nail or thorn that pierced Chriſt?

13. Q. Are you willing to cut off every right hand, and pluck out every right eye for Chriſt, and not to count any ſin too dear to part with for Jeſus Chriſt?

14. Q. Do you deſire to come to Chriſt for ſanctification as well as for juſtification; for holineſs as well as for happineſs; for conformity and likeneſs to God, as well as for acceſs to dwell with God?

15. Q. Do you come willingly, as a volunteer, at the ſound of the goſpel-trumpet, to liſt yourſelf under Chriſt's banner, reſolving to forſake the devil's camp,

to King Jeſus; to take up arms
it againſt his enemies, the devil, the
leth, all the days of your life?
you accept of all God's ordinances, his
ents, prayers, &c. as neceſſary helps to
means of conveying grace, which you will
make uſe of with care and diligence?
you accept of Chriſt's people, thoſe who
ge, as your beloved friends, your fellow-
firmly reſolving to join with Chriſt's little
traying flock, his ſin-hating flock, his flock
eath, and that notwithſtanding of the re-
ingularity?
Do you, through his grace, purpoſe never to
the multitude to do evil, or join with them in
ins; but ſtedfaſtly to avoid and reſiſt all the
ens and ſnares of evil company, and ſay with
to them, 'Depart from me, ye evil doers, for I
keep the commandments of my God?'
Are you willing to accept of the rod and diſ-
Chriſt's houſe; to welcome his convictions
rrors, as well as his comforts and ſmiles; to take
with his croſs as well as Chriſt with his crown;
the world's hatreds and ſcoffs, and other per-
ions, for Chriſt?
Are you reſolved, through grace, that no
ation or diſcouragement ſhall make you prove run-
ays or deſerters from the Captain of your ſalvation;
that you will adhere to him, and abide by his ſtand-
all the days of your life?
As you are content to accept of Chriſt, and
that belongs to him, are you not alſo willing to give
and ſurrender yourſelf to the Lord, and all that be-
gs unto you, to be diſpoſed of by him at his plea-
all that you are, ſoul and body, heart, mind,
conſcience, memory, and all that you have, time,
ties, relations, enjoyments, &c.
When Chriſt and the devil are ſtriving for
heart, and each of them ſaying, 'My ſon, give
thy heart;' and when Chriſt is putting it to your
in the days of youth, ſaying, Chuſe whom you
will

will yield unto, chuſe whom you will ſerve; What doth your heart anſwer unto him?

23. Q. Is it your purpoſe to engage to all the articles of the covenant in borrowed ſtrength, wholly diſtruſting your own ſtrength and reſolutions; and reſolving to truſt, not in your promiſe to Chriſt, but in Chriſt's promiſe to you, that he 'will never leave you nor forſake you?'

24. Q. Do you reſolve to live a life of prayer and acquaintance with Chriſt all your days, that you will always run to God, and conſult him in all caſes?

25. Q. Are you reſolved alſo to live a life of faith and dependence daily on the Son of God, for his righteouſneſs to cover guilt, for his ſtrength to perform duty, conquer ſin, reſiſt temptation, bear croſſes and afflictions?

26. Q. Are you reſolved to make ordinances always tryſting-places betwixt Chriſt and you, and to look ſtill for a meeting with him in every one of them, and to count every ſabbath and ſermon as loſt, wherein you miſs his preſence?

27. Q. Are you reſolved to engage to all theſe articles in a ſecret tranſaction and perſonal covenant with God, before you come to his table; and then to come in a ſolemn way to ſeal and ratify this bargain and covenant before men and angels at his table?

Thus let miniſters take pains to inſtruct young folk in the nature and articles of the covenant of grace, and to take them engaged, with ſome ſolemnity, to own and adhere to them, at their firſt admiſſion to the Lord's ſupper; and let them, with ſolemn and fervent prayer, recommend and give up theſe young communicants unto the Lord: Such a courſe hath been found, by experience, very much to contribute to the welfare and proſperity of the church.

4thly, It would be for the honour and intereſt of the church, to have our ſermons to the people flowing from the heart, *i. e.* for us to be ſuitably affected and impreſſed with the truths we deliver to them. A ſpeculative preacher, that preacheth merely from ſtrength

of parts doth not much good, becauſe his light hath no heat accompanying it. That which cometh only from the head, commonly reacheth no further than the head: But that which cometh from the heart, is moſt likely to reach to the heart The beſt way to bring our people to believe and be affected with our doctrine, is, to let them ſee that we believe it, and are affected with it ourſelves. Such a preacher was Paul, who 'preached and warned his hearers with tears,' Acts xx. 31. Phil. iii. 18. He knew the ſtrongeſt reaſons and arguments, propoſed without affection and warmneſs, would not prevail: Nay, a blunt iron, if hot, will ſooner pierce the wood, than a ſharper iron that is cold. Our famous countryman, Mr John Livingſtone, who was a happy inſtrument, in God's hand, of converting many ſouls, perhaps ſome hundreds at one ſermon,—he tells, in his life, That the times when he was moſt ſucceſsful, were, when he got his own heart in the moſt lively, warm, and tender frame, before he went to the pulpit.

5thly, If we would promote the credit and welfare of the church, let us be diligent to know the ſtate of our flocks, enquire into their caſes, and look after the fruits of our ſermons amongſt them. And, for this end, let us frequently viſit them in their houſes, and thereby give them occaſion to lay open their caſes to us; and let us improve theſe times by examination and inſtruction; for they are apt to forget what we ſay to them, if we do not cauſe them ſpeak ſomething relative to the ſubject themſelves. Therefore, let us ask them concerning their proficiency by the word, and what they remember of the ſermons they lately heard, and of the bible and other books which they have read, and what impreſſions theſe things made upon them? If they be convinced of the evil of ſin, and be humbled for it; and of the neceſſity of duty, and be excited to it, by what they hear or read? And let us give them advices how to hear and read more profitably for the future. Thus let us go from houſe to houſe, like the apoſtle Paul, to ſee how our people do, warning every one, as we ſee occaſion for it. Let us act the part of

good

good gardeners, who, after they have ſown their ſeeds, look after the ſpringing thereof, water ſome beds in time of drought, and pluck up the noxious weeds; likewiſe it is fit we ſhould frequently look after our examine-rolls in our cloſets, to bring the various caſes of our people to our remembrance, that we may mind them in our prayers, and prepare ſuitable doctrine for them.

6thly, If we would promote the credit and proſperity of our mother-church, let us be frequent in diſpenſing the holy ſupper amongſt our people. Our unfrequency in this ſervice, is a reproach to us among foreign churches, as well as a real loſs to the ſouls committed to our charge. If ever our people attend to what they hear, or get benefit by the goſpel, it is moſt commonly about the time of a ſacrament, and when they are making preparation for it. Though this be not a converting ordinance to the receivers, in the very nature of it, but ſtrengthening and confirming, yet ſermons and diſcourſes about this time, upon the melting ſubject of a crucified Jeſus, have been the means of converting many thouſands. Beſides, the frequent diſpenſing of this ſoul-affecting ordinance, would be a good way to keep up the remembrance of God, of Chriſt, and of heaven, among our people; and to keep up the impreſſions of the evil of ſin, the worth of ſouls, the love of God, in giving his Son to the world, and the love of Chriſt in dying for us. Likewiſe, it would be a good mean to help the careleſſneſs of our people's minds, the weakneſs of their memories, the dullneſs of their capacities, and their ſmall proficiency in knowledge: For in this ordinance they have a compendious and affecting view of the whole ſcheme of the Chriſtian religion at once; they have man's fall and diſeaſe, together with his remedy and recovery, ſet forth to the life, and in ſuch a way as to make impreſſion upon their outward ſenſes. And, further, would we have our people effectually engaged to family-worſhip, ſecret prayer, and a tender walk? Would we have ſwearing, mainch'd oaths, ſabbath-breaking, and other vices, kept under conſtant rebukes? Would we conquer theſe evils which prevail among our people? let us frequently

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ſet be fore their eyes the bleeding wounds of a crucified Jeſus, thoſe ſin-killing objects, as repreſented in the holy ſacrament. We have no better way than this to advance the glory of our Redeemer, and the ſalvation of our people's ſouls; and, ſeeing we have ſo ſhort a time for doing either, we have need to haſten ourſelves. Nay, my brethren, as ye would deſire to keep glorious Chriſt in perpetual eſteem, ſin in continual diſgrace, the world in laſting contempt, religion in conſtant credit among men; and as ye would deſire to retrieve the honour of this national church, and wipe off her reproach, I beſeech you to adminiſter the Lord's ſupper oftner than once in the year, in your congregations.

7thly, As I would have you frequent in the adminiſtration, ſo I would have you ſtrict in the admiſſion to it. Our confeſſion of faith declares it to be a great ſin in miniſters to admit either ignorant or ungodly perſons to the Lord's table. It is incumbent on us, therefore, to look well out, that we do not admit any ſwearer, drunkard, ſabbath-breaker, evil ſpeaker, malicious perſon, or any other guilty of any ſcandalous ſin, to eat of theſe holy things; *procul hinc, procul inde profani!* It would be a mean to dart home convictions and awakening thoughts upon ſinners, to find themſelves excluded from this holy ordinance for want of family-worſhip, for idle walking on the Lord's day, for malicious words or actions, for exceſſive drinking, for abuſing of God's name, for uſing petty oaths, as, by faith, conſcience, &c. And good reaſon have we to exclude ſuch, ſeeing the ſpirit of God diſtinguiſheth betwixt the precious and the vile, by the characters of 'him that ſweareth, and him that feareth an oath,' Eccl. ix. 2. And ſurely they who uſe minch'd oaths, can never be ranked among them who fear an oath. I myſelf have the experience of ſeveral perſons, who have been thankful to me for keeping them back for ſuch things, becauſe the diſpenſation had been bleſſed for humbling and reforming them.

Object. 1ſt, It is hard to diſcover perſons who may be guilty of ſome of theſe evils.

Anſ.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, Let us endeavour to get faithful and conſcientious elders, who will impartially inform us of our people's manners; and, if we want ſuch, let us be willing to take information from others. 2*dly*, Let us poſe the conſciences of thoſe whom we ſuſpect as guilty of any of theſe practices, and they may be brought to confeſs them.

Object. 2*d*, We will be in hazard of diſobliging many of our people by ſuch ſtrictneſs.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, We may edify men, and promote their ſoul's intereſt, even when we diſpleaſe them; 2*dly*, Better diſpleaſe men, than Him who is our great maſter and judge. 3*dly*, Let us take pains to convince our people of the awful charge given to us, as the ſtewards of God's houſe who muſt give the childrens bread to the dogs. As Jehojadah of old ſet porters at the gates of the houſe of the Lord 'that none who was unclean in any thing ſhould enter in,' 2 Chron. xxiii. 19.—ſo God hath ſet us miniſters as porters to the holy table of the Lord, that no profane ſinner, nor ſwearer, no malicious perſon, no prayerleſs man, no man that harbours any known ſin, and is unwilling to part with it, may approach to it. As the Cherubims ſtood at the entry of paradiſe with a drawn ſword, to keep Adam from entering in to eat the tree of life; ſo miniſters are to ſtand with the ſword of the Lord's threatnings brandiſhed againſt every impenitent ſinner, every ſwearer, every drunkard, liar, every ſabbath-breaker, every back-biter and hater of his neighbour, every neglecter of family-worſhip or ſecret prayer, that they do not preſume to ruſh upon this holy ordinance, while they continue in any of theſe ſins. This ſtrictneſs is neceſſarry for the welfare and reputation of our church, and to wipe away reproach.

8*thly*, As we would conſult the credit and ſafety of his church, let us conſider well whom we appoint for our ſucceſſors in office; *i. e.* let us take care whom we licenſe and ordain, that they be men of piety, prudence and parts, men that will exert themſelves for the glory of God, and for winning of the ſouls of the riſing generation, that we may have ground to hope that religion will

will be entailed to ſucceeding ages. We ſee how ſtrictly the apoſtle enjoin'd "Timothy to commit the miniſtry to faithful men, to lay hands ſuddenly on no men, not to be partaker of other mens ſins, but keep himſelf pure," 1 Tim. v. 22. 2 Tim. ii. 2. Theſe commands alſo oblige us to ſee that thoſe whom we bring into the holy miniſtry be faithful men, according to the beſt of our diſcerning; men who have pure and honeſt ends in their undertaking; and not thoſe who aim more to win a livelihood to themſelves, than to win ſouls to Chriſt, or thoſe who will take unwarrantable methods to thruſt themſelves into pariſhes, by courting patrons, or accepting their preſentations; a practice which no law requires, a practice which manifeſtly tends to bring a corrupt miniſtry into the church, and which hath already brought in great diviſions and confuſions into this poor church. If patronage be a yoke and grievance to the church of God, as we all profeſs to own, it muſt ſurely be a ſin for men, by their own voluntary deed, to bring on that grievance, and to wreath that yoke about the Church's neck; when at the ſame time they know they are under no neceſſity from the law to do ſo, ſeeing pariſhes can be planted otherwiſe, if our preachers would give way to it.

Our preſent ſituation is ſo eaſy, by the act of Parliament 1719, that patronage can do this church no harm, without the active concurrence of a preacher. Well, then, hath the Legiſlator become ſo kind as to unſting the patronage-act, and ſo tender of this Church's liberties, as to leave her freedom at her own choice; what a ſhame will it be, in that caſe, if her own preachers ſhall turn her oppreſſors? O tell it not in Gath! &c. But, ſeeing the plain and free-warnings emitted by this and neighbouring Synods, do ſet the ſin and danger of this practice in ſo clear a light, I need add no more upon it, except my earneſt prayer to God, that he may bleſs theſe means, ſo as to put a ſtop to this moſt pernicious practice. *Amen.*

9*thly*, As we would deſire the welfare of this Church, and prevent her reproach, let us endeavour, as far as poſſible, to get pariſhes planted with their own conſent

and

ad liking: For, when this is done againſt their will, frequently hath a woful iſſue; congregations are bro-n, ordinances are forſaken, Chriſt's flock is diſperſed, d the miniſtry is deſpiſed; all which very much tend our reproach, as well as the hinderance of the king-m of Chriſt. Wherefore, my dear brethren, let us be heed what we do in this affair, ſeeing ſo much doth pend upon it.

There is a controverſy very lately riſen amongſt us, ncerning the people's right to elect their paſtors: me take it wholly from them, and give it to the pres-ytery or church-repreſentative; and the church's iends are diſtracted by writings on both ſides. If I ay offer my opinion, I humbly apprehend the ſtate of e controverſy is not duly conſidered by thoſe who andle it. And many of our differences and diſputes o proceed from our not ſtating the queſtion ſo diſ-inctly and accurately as we ſhould; and, when this is nce done, frequently the debate falls.

The queſtion, then, ought not to be ſtated generally nd confuſedly, as, Whether the people or the preſby-ery have the right of electing the paſtors of the church? eeing we may ſafely grant they both have an intereſt herein, the one without prejudice to the other. Neither s the queſtion to be ſtated, Whether the preſbytery or hurch-repreſentative have a power to elect and ordain aſtors, upon ſome occaſions, and for ſome ſpecial em-loyments and ſervices, without the choice and conſent f the people? As, for my part, I believe they have; nd that theſe paſtors, ſo elected, are lawful paſtors of he catholic church, and ought to be acknowleged as ſuch by the people. Nor is the queſtion to be ſtated, Whether the preſbytery hath any power at all in the elec-ion of paſtors to particular pariſhes? No, for it is owned they have a great power, in conjunction with the pariſh-es, and ought to preſide in the election. But, if the queſ-tion be ſtated, Whether the preſbytery hath the ſole power of electing, excluſive of the voice or conſent of the pariſhes to which the paſtors are elected? They who eſpouſe that ſide of the queſtion (in my humble opinion) will have a hard pull to prove it, either from

ſcripture, reaſon, or fathers. And, that they may kn
what they have to do, let the queſtion be clearly a
diſtinctly ſtated, as it ought to be, in a ſuitableneſs
the preſent ſituation of this church, and then it will r
thus: *Queſt.* "Whether the preſbytery, or church-r
preſentative, hath a right to elect and appoint paſt
to particular flocks of Chriſtian people, without the c
or conſent of theſe flocks, and even when they diſſe
and reclaim againſt their deed? And, whether, in ſu
caſes, the preſbytery hath power to conſtitute and
the ſpiritual and paſtoral relation betwixt theſe paſt
and theſe flocks, ſo that they muſt neceſſarily ackno
ledge them as their proper paſtors, and receive all c
dinances from them; yea, be tyed to them ſo muc
that they cannot have acceſs, without the allowance
theſe paſtors, to partake of ſealing ordinances diſpenſ
by others? So that all theſe Chriſtian people, howev
valuable they be, muſt be in effect excommunicated,
they do not receive theſe paſtors impoſed violently up
them?" Now, if the controverſy be thus ſtated among t
(as it certainly ought to be) the writers for the preſby
ry's power will find it a difficult taſk to inſtruct and ſu
port ſuch a power from the word of God, ſound re
ſon, or the practice of the primitive church; nay, I a
of the mind, all the three will be found to unite agai
them, ſeeing all of them declare for the great inter
which Chriſtians have in the choice and ſettlement
thoſe who are to be their ſpiritual guides, and that th
are to be conſulted in this important affair. Our m
eminent divines, both abroad and at home, have, ev
ſince the Reformation, ſtrenuouſly argued for the pe
ples right againſt the Papiſts and their clergy's impoſi
power, from the word of God, and particularly fro
Acts i. 15. 23. 26. Acts vi. 2. 3. 5. 6. Acts xiv. 2
whoſe arguments I have not yet ſeen ſatisfyingly a
ſwered, either by Papiſt or Proteſtant. But, beſides
theſe, it may ſatisfy any unbiaſſed enquirer, if he b
conſider the characters which Chriſt gives his floc
that "they hear and know his voice in his ſhepherd
and do diſtinguiſh it from the voice of falſe ſhepher
and "will not follow theſe, but flee from them

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John x. 3. 4. 5. and the command that is given to all Chriſtians to "try the ſpirits," 1 John iv. 1. and to "beware of falſe prophets, which come to them in ſheeps cloathing," Matthew vii. 15. and to "mark and avoid thoſe who teach unſound doctrine," Rom. xvi. 17. 18. Phil. iii. 2. and to judge of the doctrine which is delivered to them by their teachers, 1 Cor. x. 15. and for doing whereof, the Bereans are highly commended by the Spirit of God, Acts xvii. 11. I ſay, it may ſatisfy every unprejudiced perſon that ſeriouſly conſiders theſe ſcripture texts, and the commands given to the diſciples of Chriſt therein, that the word of God doth allow a great intereſt to all judicious Chriſtians in the choice of their paſtors; and that it is their unqueſtionable right and privilege to have a judgment of diſcretion concerning theſe paſtors to whom they are bound to commit the guiding, edification and inſtruction, of their precious ſouls: And no patron, no heritor, no body of men, or judicatory whatſomever, can deprive the people of that right and privilege which God allows to them.

But, granting the ſcripture had mentioned nothing of the peoples right in this matter, but had given all power to the preſbytery, (as ſome would have it) and left them to manage it, as they ſhould be anſwerable to their great Lord and Maſter: Yet, even in that caſe, I think it eaſy to demonſtrate, from the general rules of the word, and the dictates of ſound reaſon, that preſbyteries ought always to exerciſe their electing and planting power, with the advice and conſent of the Chriſtian congregations immediately concerned, and not in oppoſition to their declared inclinations and preſſing requeſts. I ſhall mention two plain ſcripture rules, which determine me to think ſo, viz. that in 1 Cor. x. 31. "Whatſoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." And that in 1 Cor. xiv. 26. "Let all things be done unto edifying." Now, miniſters are more concerned to obſerve theſe rules than other men, ſeeing their office is peculiarly deſigned for advancing the glory of God, and the edification of his church. And, is it not evident to every rational ſober mind, that it is more for the glory

of God, and the edification of the church, to ſettle pa tors in congregations with their own conſent and goo liking, than to thruſt them in upon them againſt the will? When we plant miniſters amongſt a people, who perſons they eſteem, and whoſe miniſtry they affect they will more readily hearken to their inſtructions, ſul mit to their reproofs, and obey their directions, tha they will do theirs againſt whom they have conceiv the ſtrongeſt averſion and prejudice. The ſettling pariſhes in a violent manner doth ſtop the ſucceſs of th goſpel, and defeat the great and valuable ends of a go pel miniſtry, which are mainly theſe two: (1.) Th converſion of ſinners, and reconciling them to Go Acts xxvi. 18. 2 Cor. v. 20. (2.) The perfecting the ſaints, and edifying of the body of Chriſt, Eph. i 12. Now, how can any of theſe noble ends be reach ed by ſuch miniſters, when either the people do not a tend their miniſtry at all, or, if they do, yet their grudg and prejudices againſt them, do woefully ſhut their ea againſt all their inſtructions and admonitions? O, goſpel-miniſters would more cloſely attend and purſu theſe great ends of their miniſtry, the groans of the op preſſed would not ſo much afflict us, as they are lik more and more to do, if God in his tender mercy pre vent not. I grant church-authority is not to be deſpi ed; for God hath clothed his miniſters with ſpiritua power and authority in his church: But ſtill we are t remember, when we exerciſe this power in any caſe we ought to do it for edification, and not for deſtruction 2 Cor. x. 8. and xiii. 10. We are not to be lords ove God's heritage, to do as we liſt; nor are we to exerciſ any dominion over their faith or conſciences, but we are to promote their comfort and joy, 2 Pet. v. 3. 2 Cor i. 24. The church's edification is the great rule and end of all church-power. We ſee how cloſely the A poſtle Paul kept this rule in his eye, in all the exerciſ of his church-power and authority, 2 Cor. xii. 19. "W do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying." H regarded the edification, not only of the rich and great but alſo of the pooreſt ſaints, and the meaneſt member of the body of Chriſt; and ſurely, the edification of ſuc

is not below the conſideration of the moſt eminent miniſters, or the greateſt judicatory of Chriſt's houſe. We ſee what regard Chriſt had to his little ones, and what wrath he threatens againſt thoſe who offend them, Matt. xviii. 6. Luke xvii. 2.

Well then, my brethren, let us have a tender regard to theſe ſcripture-rules I have mentioned, in all our actings in judicatories, and eſpecially with reſpect to the ſettlement of churches; and if there be any *Act* or *Rule* in this church, particularly *that* lately made, which hath any thing in it inconſiſtent with the foreſaid rules (as indeed there ſeems to be, according to the ſenſe now put upon it) I do earneſtly wiſh and pray, That all my reverend brethren may reſolve upon addreſſing the venerable Aſſembly in the moſt decent and dutiful manner, that they may be pleaſed to rectify it, ſo as it may better anſwer the great ends we ought all to have in view, the glory of God, and the edification of the body of Chriſt. And this I move without any deſign to reflect upon the authority of the Aſſembly, (which we ought to treat with all due regard) or to give any offence; and neither ſhould any take it, ſeeing there is none of our courts that pretend to infallibility; as they have altered, ſo they ſtill can alter, their acts and rules, when they ſee good reaſon for it. And the adminiſtration we live under (bleſſed be God) is ſo mild and gentle, that we have liberty to addreſs our ſuperiors, both civil and eccleſiaſtic, concerning what is gravaminous to us: And why ſhould we not improve our liberty in addreſſing both of them, for removing whatever hinders the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, to whoſe ſervice we miniſters are peculiarly devoted?

10*thly*, If we would promote this church's welfare, and prevent her reproach, let us join faſting, weeping, and mourning, together with our prayers; as we are directed both in text and context, Joel ii. 12. "Let us weep betwixt the porch and the altar," in ſight of all the people, and bewail thoſe ſins and backſlidings, which grieve God, and provoke him to give up this church to reproach. And, amongſt others of our ſins, we have cauſe

cauſe to confeſs and lament our impenitency, and neglect of obſerving days of faſting and humiliation for our own ſins, and the ſins of the land and church of which we are members and office-bearers. Alas, what a bad token is it! When judgments are viſibly impending over us, that there is ſo little of an inclination or willingneſs to appoint and keep ſuch days with our people, for enumerating, confeſſing and ſpreading out our heinous and God-provoking ſins before the Lord, ſuch as our ignorance, unbelief, atheiſm, unthankfulneſs, unfruitfulneſs, treacherous dealing, &c. See a more full enumeration of our ſins in the poſtſcript of this diſcourſe.

11*thly*, If we would advance the church's credit, and avert her reproach, let us all be careful to preach to our people by our lives as well as by our lips, to confirm our doctrine in the pulpit by our converſation out of it. Let us mind, that a looſe way of living will ſoon demoliſh all that is built by the moſt lively way of preaching; for our people have eyes to ſee how we walk, as well as ears to hear what we ſay. Hence it was that the Apoſtle Paul gave ſuch a weighty advice to Timothy, a young miniſter, 1 Tim. iv. 12. "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpirit, in faith, in purity." And as the Apoſtle adviſed others, ſo he lived himſelf: Obſerve how he appeals to the Theſſalonians, among whom he had laboured, concerning the exactneſs and exemplarineſs of his miniſterial walk, 1 Theſſ. ii. 10. "Ye are witneſſes, and God alſo, how holily, and juſtly, and unblameably, we behaved ourſelves among you that believe." And this holy and ſhining converſation of the Apoſtle contributed much to the ſucceſs of his doctrine. Alas, ſhining doctrine, without a ſhining walk, will never enlighten nor enliven our hearers. If, after we have preached againſt pride, paſſion, covetouſneſs, injuſtice, intemperance, lightneſs, unchaſtity, contention, unchariteableneſs, unmercifulneſs, malice, revenge, &c. we ourſelves ſhould be found guilty of any of theſe evils if we be worldly, intemperate, malicious, unjuſt, contentious, or unmerciful; if we be light or frothy; if

ny corrupt communication proceed out of our mouths; then we juſt pull down with the one hand, what we build up with the other. We tempt people to think, we do not ourſelves believe what we would perſuade them to believe; that we only talk of theſe things becauſe it is our trade, and we get our living by it. It is not eaſy to expreſs the miſchievous influence which looſeneſs in a miniſter's walk hath upon the intereſt of religion amongſt a people; hence it is that the Spirit of God ſaith to miniſters, Iſa. lii. 11. "Be ye clean that bear the veſſels of the Lord." And Chriſt ſaith to his diſciples, who were deſigned to be miniſters, Matt. v. 16. "Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works." It adds greatly to the credit and proſperity of a church, when her miniſters have holy and ſhining converſations; whereas it expoſeth her to ſad reproach when it is otherwiſe. "Lord give not up thy heritage in *Scotland* to this reproach."

Queſt. When may it be ſaid, that a miniſter's converſation is of a ſhining character? and how ſhall we attain to it?

Anſ. In order thereunto, let us, 1*ſt*, Study Meekneſs, patience, and peaceableneſs of ſpirit; and, when we meet with provocations, let us labour to rule our ſpirits, and keep reaſon upon the throne. Let us neither be ſoon angry, nor long angry. To be patient under reproaches and bad uſuage, and ready to forgive injuries, is ſuch a ſweet Chriſtian diſpoſition, as would very much adorn our character. That is a noble advice the apoſtle gives, 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. "The ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves."

2*dly*, Let us ſtudy juſtice and righteouſneſs in all our dealings with others, even to a ſhoe-latchet, that we may be able to appeal to our people, with the prophet Samuel, whom have we injured or wronged? So doth Paul appeal to the Theſſalonians, with reſpect to his juſt dealing among them, 1 Theſſ. ii. 10. The leaſt appearance of injuſtice or unfair dealing in a miniſter, is moſt reproachful to his character, and exceedingly

exceedingly marrs his ſucceſs; and therefore the apoſtle directs the man of God to be juſt, and follow after righteouſneſs, 1 Tim. vi. 11. Tit. i. 8.

3*dly*, Let us be clothed with humility, which is a ſhining ornament in a miniſter's converſation. We are not to be puffed up with our parts or attainments, or to deſpiſe thoſe who fall ſhort of us; but we muſt be willing to become all things to all men, and ſervants to every one, for the good of their ſouls. And thus we would reſemble our Maſter, who was meek and lowly, and taught us by his example to humble ourſelves to ſerve one another. It hath been obſerved, that God uſes to bleſs the labours of thoſe of meaner parts, who are humble and diligent, when thoſe of greater parts, who are lifted up, are blaſted.

4*thly*, Temperance, ſobriety and chaſtity are very adorning to a miniſter's walk. He ought to have power over his appetite, to reſtrain it, as to eating or drinking, and never to be enſlaved to any baſe luſt, Tit. i. 7. 8. 2 Tim. ii. 22.

5*thly*, If we would adorn our character, let us be diſengaged from the world as much as may be, that we may attend our ſpiritual work of ſerving God, and winning of ſouls without diſtraction. Our eyes ſhould not be dazzled with the glittering luſtre of gold and ſilver; but we ought to ſhew a generous contempt of theſe things, as thoſe who firmly believe the great and everlaſting things of that world we preach to others, and unto which we preſs men to elevate their minds and affections. What a reproach is it to thoſe who preach this doctrine to others, and live contrary to it themſelves?

6*thly*, Let us ſtudy, when we converſe with others, to mix ſomething that is ſpiritual and edifying. We are called the ſalt of the earth, and therefore ought to ſeaſon the places and companies where we are, with ſome ſavoury and uſeful diſcourſe; this is much better than fooliſh talking and jeſting, which is not convenient for thoſe of our character, Eph. v. 4. For a miniſter to have nothing of God, of Chriſt, of Heaven, or of ſerious godliness, in his mouth, but when he is in

the

pulpit, is an evidence that he is not very zealous to note the great ends of his office, the glory of God the ſalvation of mens ſouls; for, if he were, out of abundance of the heart the mouth would ſpeak, l be ready to drop ſomething now and then to the iour of God, and the confirmation of thoſe truths deliver in public.

Thus I have mentioned ſeveral things that would ke a miniſter's converſation of a ſhining character; ich, if ſtudied, would tend very much to promote reputation and welfare of this church, and to avert reproach. And, having ſaid ſo much to my bre-en of the miniſtry, I ſhall now conclude with,

A WORD TO THE PEOPLE.

LET me exhort you to join with miniſters in is neceſſary work of weeping and wreſtling for the rch of God, and eſpecially for his heritage in the id of your nativity. Though the command in the t be directed to miniſters, yet elſewhere we find it tended to people of all ranks, Pſal. cxxii. 6. Pray for e peace of Jeruſalem, they ſhall proſper that love thee. ell, then, let me beſeech you all to weep, and cry ith us, "ſpare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine ritage to reproach." And with your tears and prayers that ye join your moſt earneſt endeavours to pro-ote the credit and welfare of the church, accord-g to the ſtations wherein God hath ſet you. 1. re ye magiſtrates? Exert yourſelves, both by your thority and example, to diſcourage vice and immora-y. 2. Are ye elders? See to aſſiſt miniſters, by proving ſin, and informing againſt it. 3. Are ye achers of youth? Labour to inſtil the principles of ligion and virtue into the young generation very ear-, and train them up in the abhorrence of vice, and hatever hath a tendency to it. 4. Are ye parents and ads of families? See that young ones be taught both read and pray; catechiſe both children and ſervants

upon the ſabbath-evening; call them to an account what they remember of the ſermons they have heard; perform family-worſhip with them in all its parts. Be careful to reprove ſin, ſuch as lying, ſwearing, ſabbath-breaking, neglect of prayer, &c. And, whatever be your rank or ſtation in the world, I exhort you to ſet apart time for mourning and weeping for your own ſins, and the ſins of the land, which may provoke the Lord to leave us and give us up to reproach. Pray for the miniſters which are planted among you; and pray earneſtly for a faithful ſoul-winning miniſtry to be raiſed up in the church, and planted in vacant congregations; and that all impediments in the way may be removed, and the incoming of a corrupt miniſtry prevented, pray that the Spirit of God may be poured down from on high upon us and all our endeavours, which would retrieve the credit of the church, and avert her reproach. Amen.

POSTSCRIPT,

Containing an Enumeration of ſome Sins to be confeſſed and mourned over, upon Faſt-days, and other occaſions.

1. THE abounding atheiſm of many in the land, both in heart and life: the practical atheiſm of thoſe who live as if there were no God nor Providence to govern the world, who put the creatures, the world, and ſelf in God's room, and aſcribe their mercies to fortune, their own wiſdom and induſtry, rather than to God.

2. The groſs immoralities which abound among us, as drunkenneſs, uncleanneſs, lying, backbiting, defrauding, profane ſwearing, falſe ſwearing in matters of commerce, profaning the Lord's day, by walking and travelling unneceſſarily, tranſporting goods, and otherwiſe.

3.

. Our woeful ſecurity in theſe evils, and obſtinate ring to predominant ſins, deſpiſing all reproofs for n, and warnings to forſake them.

The inordinate ſetting of our hearts upon earthly yments and ſenſual ſatisfaction, to the ſad neglect theſe things, wherein our chief happineſs doth ſiſt, viz. the enjoying of God, and communion with

The great ignorance of God and of goſpel truths, ch continueth in a land of ſuch light. The great rance of Jeſus Chriſt, of his mediation and offices, of the way of making uſe of Chriſt for juſtification ſanctification, for ſtrength in duties, and for ac- to and acceptance with God.

. The neglect of the worſhip of God in families, in ſecret, and the great reſtraining of prayer before l

. Our unfruitfulneſs under the means of grace.

. The backſlidings of all ranks from God, and leav- their firſt love; the great decay of the life and pow- f godlineſs, and of holy and tender walking, both iniſters and profeſſors

. The ſloth and contempt of many, in not attend- upon God's holy ordinances.

0. Our attending ordinances for the faſhion, and making them tryſting places for meeting with God, means of communion with him.

1. Our contenting ourſelves with man's teaching, not ſeeking after the teachings and influences of the it, in hearing of the word.

2. Our ſinning away the holy ſpirit from ordinan- ; our not lamenting for his withdrawing, nor wreſt- for his return.

3. Our formality in prayer, and not making uſe of interceſſion of Chriſt, nor employing the aſſiſtance he ſpirit in this duty.

4. Our reſting upon an outwatd attendance of or- nces, and a name to live, without ſeeking after a k of grace and regeneration in our ſouls.

5. Our not valuing the news of redeeming love which

which the goſpel brings to us, nor embracing glorious Chriſt as offered to thus therein.

16. Our not living a life of faith upon Chriſt, nor making continual uſe of his meritorious blood, and imputed righteouſneſs for our juſtification, ſanctification, ſubduing ſin, performing duty, acceptance with God, and peace of conſcience.

17. Our going about to eſtabliſh our own righteouſneſs, by putting our religious duties, our juſt dealing, or moral honeſty, in the room of glorious Chriſt, who alone is the Lord our righteouſneſs.

18. Our unfrequency and ſloth in celebrating the memorials of redeeming love, and of the death and ſufferings of our bleſſed Lord, in the holy ſupper.

19. The profanation of the Lord's table, by the approach of thoſe who are ignorant, prayerleſs, or ungodly livers.

20. Our neglecting ſolemn preparation for this near approach, by ſelf-examination, ſecret humiliation, and wreſtling with God for his preſence, and renewing covenant with him.

21. Our not keeping up the impreſſion of ſacramental vows, and of the matchleſs love of Chriſt diſplayed to us, ſo as to be thereby conſtrained to live to Him that died for us.

22. Our not imitating the pattern of the holy Jeſus, in his meekneſs, holineſs, ſelf-denial, mortification to the world, patience under wrongs, thankfulneſs for mercies, diligence in prayer, zeal for God's ſervice, concern for the good of others, willingneſs to die, and reſignation to God's will.

23. The neglect of maſters and families in inſtructing their children and ſervants, and uſing their authority to ſuppreſs ſin amongſt them.

24. Our unthankful forgetting of the many ſignal deliverances which God hath wrought for this church and land; and our unthankful abuſe of the many valuable mercies we ſtill enjoy.

25. Our prefidious dealing with God, in breaking both national and perſonal covenant; and our want of zeal

zeal for maintaining truth, purity and piety, in oppoſition to abounding error, ſuperſtition and profanity.

26. Our indifferency about the coming of Chriſt's kingdom; our little praying for the peace and proſperity of Jeruſalem; and our minding our own things, more than the things of Jeſus Chriſt.

27. The heaven-daring attacks made upon the goſpel-revelation, by infidels among ourſelves.

28. Our impenitency and inſenſibleneſs under ſpiritual judgments, and manifold tokens of God's anger, ſuch as, withdrawing his ſpirit from miniſters and profeſſors, blaſting of ordinances, dividing us in his anger, giving us up to ſpiritual oppreſſion and perſecution, letting looſe a ſpirit of error and deluſion, &c.

FINIS.

A

SACRAMENTAL DIRECTORY:

OR A

TREATISE

CONCERNING

THE SANCTIFICATION

OF A

COMMUNION SABBATH.

THE PREFACE.

HIS Directory being firſt publiſhed in the year
, the preface was added to the ſecond edition of
the year 1726, in which now I have made ſome
tions and alterations. The book itſelf alſo is con-
ably enlarged from what it was at firſt, namely in
ing and preſſing the neceſſity of communicating,
bedience to our Lord's dying command; and it is
e regretted that there ſhould be ſtill ſo much need
arging it. Ah, that ſo many Chriſtians, who pro-
reſpect to Chriſt as their Saviour, ſhould live in
neglect of his dying charge! Perhaps, my friends,
n viewing the hazard of eating unworthily, ſome of
may think you are on the ſafeſt ſide to keep away
n this ordinance altogether; not conſidering, that the
ger of unworthy refuſing is fully as great as that of
worthy receiving: For you ſee thoſe who make light
Chriſt's invitation to the marriage-ſupper eſcaped no
er than he that came without the wedding-gar-
t, Mat. xxii. 7. 13. Likewiſe I have adduced ma-
arguments to preſs frequency in communicating, and
e anſwered objections againſt it; which, if you du-
onſider, you muſt own that frequent partaking is
t advantageous and neceſſary for the exigencies of
r ſouls, and highly acceptable unto God. If there
' a book of remembrance written before the Lord,
them that feared the Lord, thought upon his name,
ſpoke one to another," Mal. iii. 16. we have no
and to queſtion, but there is a book of remembrance
tten for them that love their Redeemer, and often
ember his death and ſufferings in the ſacrament,
ch he hath inſtituted for that end. And as I would
e you come frequently to this ſolemn ordinance, ſo
ould always have you coming with ſuitable prepara-

tion; and, for your help in this matter, I have compoſed the following directory. Special care ſhould be taken, that our frequency do not breed formality, but that we be as devout as frequent; and, though we communicate never ſo frequently, that we truſt not to former preparations, but that we examine and prepare ourſelves of new for every communion.

But ſeeing it is in vain to exhort Chriſtians to frequent receiving, unleſs miniſters do alſo frequently adminiſtrate this ordinance, and call their people to partake thereof; it may be proper to ſpeak ſomething of the neceſſity of frequent diſpenſing of the Lord's ſupper. All the arguments and reaſons which I bring in the enſuing treatiſe, to prove the neceſſity of people's frequent partaking, do as much prove the neceſſity of miniſters frequent diſpenſing: ſeeing, if miniſters do not diſpenſe, the people cannot partake: But, beſides theſe, I ſhall, with all humility and becoming reſpect, add ſome things here, which, I hope, may be of weight with myſelf, and other miniſters of the goſpel, to perſuade to frequent diſpenſing.

I. The inſpired apoſtles of Chriſt, and other paſtors of the church that were contemporary with them, did (in obedience to the intimation which their Lord and Maſter gave them at the firſt inſtitution) frequently diſpenſe the Lord's ſupper to the Chriſtians in their days; yea, it was their ordinary cuſtom to do it every Lord's day, Acts ii. 46. Acts xx. 7. The inſpired penman of that book doth mention the breaking of bread as a conſtant concomitant to the apoſtles doctrine and prayers, Acts ii. 42.

II. In imitation of the apoſtles, the paſtors of the ancient church did keep up the practice of celebrating the Lord's Supper every Lord's day, through the ſecond, third, fourth, and fifth centuries. To evidence this (if it were called in queſtion) I might cite many paſſages from the hiſtories of Euſebius and Socrates, and the writings of Juſtin Martyr, Cyrian, Chryſoſtom, Hierom, Ambroſe, Auguſtine, and ſeveral others, who on that

account

ccount uſed to call the Lord's day *Dies Panis*; but, it being a matter of fact of notour, I need not blot paper with quotations to this purpoſe. Nay, it is plain, from the foreſaid ancient writers, that the Lord's ſupper continued to be diſpenſed in ſome places, not only every Lord's day, but alſo every day of the week, and that for ſeveral centuries: Which practice Auguſtine (who lived in the fifth century) doth not ſeem ſo heartily to approve; for, Lib. de Eccleſiaſticis, Cap. 53. he hath theſe words, "Quotidie communionem Euchariſticæ nec vitupero nec laudo; omnibus tamen Dominicis Diebus communicandum ſuadeo," *i. e.* "I neither praiſe nor diſpraiſe daily receiving of the Lord's ſupper; but I would have all men to communicate each Lord's day." Moreover, learned men, who are beſt acquainted with the antiquities of the Chriſtian church, do obſerve, that unfrequency in celebrating this ſacrament did creep in together with other antichriſtian errors and defections, into the church of Chriſt.

III. I ſhall therefore paſs the ages of darkneſs and defection, and come to the two laſt centuries of the church, and take a ſhort view of the practice of ſome proteſtant churches ſince our reformation from popery. I grant, the Lord's ſupper hath not been celebrated ſo oft ſince that time, as in the firſt ages of the church. We have the reaſon pointed at in a book, which repreſents the practice of the church of Geneva, particularly in celebrating the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, which was four times in the year. The book is intituled, *laws and ſtatutes of Geneva, anent eccleſiaſtic diſcipline*, tranſlated out of the French, and printed London, Anno 1643. p. 7. we have theſe words: "For as the ſupper hath been inſtituted by our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt to be frequented and uſed, and alſo it hath been obſerved in the primitive Chriſtian church, until ſuch time as the devil hath turned all upſide down, ſetting up the maſs inſtead thereof, which fault ought to be corrected, and alſo the rare celebrating thereof: We have determined and ordained, that it ſhall be miniſtered four times a-year."

Again, let us look into the practice of the reformed churches of France, whilſt their liberty continued. In the acts of the national ſynod held at Charentoun, printed London, Anno 1644. cap. 12. art. 14. we have theſe words. "Although it hath been a cuſtom in moſt of the churches in theſe parts, to celebrate the holy communion only four times every year; yet it is much wiſhed and deſired that it might be uſed more frequently."

As for the reformed churches in the United Provinces, or the Dutch churches, we ſee what was their practice, in *corpus diſciplinæ*, publiſhed by the miniſters and elders of the Dutch congregation in London, Anno 1645. cap. 3. ſect. 2. art 3. "It is appointed that the Lord's ſupper be adminiſtered every two months (*i. e.* ſix times a-year) wherein the churches under perſecution are left to their liberty."

As to the churches in New England, we have account of their practice, *brief narrative of the practice of the churches in New England*, printed London, Anno 16[illegible], p. 8. "As for the adminiſtration of the Lord's ſupper, becauſe Chriſt deſires us to do it often, we commonly have it monthly, though we tie not ourſelves to any ſet time, but alter it as often as reaſon appears."

Let us come to the church of Scotland, and conſider the ancient practice of our worthy reformers in this matter. And, in the *firſt* place, if we look to the old Scots liturgy, or the *book of common order*, which was written by John Knox, firſt for the order of the Engliſh kirk at Geneva, whereof he was miniſter, and approved by John Calvin, printed at Geneva, Anno 1556. and afterwards received and uſed by the reformed king of Scotland; we will find, in the 10th chapter, concerning the manner of adminiſtration of the Lord's ſupper, theſe words: "The day when the Lord's ſupper is miniſtered, which is commonly uſed once a-month, or ſo oft as the congregation ſhall think expedient, the miniſter uſeth to ſay as followeth," &c. From which it appears, that the firſt practice of our reformers, after the reformation of this nation from popery, was to adminiſtrate the Lord's Supper commonly once a-month. Afterwards, it ſeemeth, they found that the people did not

not ſo generally fall in with the foreſaid order for monthly Sacraments as could be wiſhed: And therefore in the General Aſſembly, which was held at Edinburgh in December 1562, they thought fit to condeſcend to a leſs frequent adminiſtration of this ordinance; for, in their act thereanent, recorded by Cald. in his hiſtory, page 816, we have theſe words: "It is ordained, that the communion be four times miniſtred in the year within borough towns, and twice in country pariſhes."

Here, indeed, there is a diſtinction made betwixt the frequency in boroughs and country pariſhes: But, in the firſt book of diſcipline, which was compiled by ſeverals of our famous reformers, by way of addreſs to the civil government, and much about the ſame time approved and eſtabliſhed both by church and ſtate, we find four times in the year condeſcended upon for the ſacrament, without any diſtinction of congregations, *Cap.* 2. *Parag.* 2. They tell us indeed, that the order of Geneva, concerning the miniſtration of the ſacraments, was at that time uſed in ſome of their churches, *i. e.* the *book of common order* forecited, which declareth for monthly ſacraments; but, in *Cap.* 11. *Parag.* 5. they give their judgment for quarterly communions, in theſe words: "Four times in the year we think ſufficient to the adminiſtration of the Lord's table, which we deſire to be diſtincted, that the ſuperſtition of times may be avoided ſo far as may be; for your honours are not ignorant how ſuperſtitiouſly the people ran to that action at Paſch, even as if the time gave virtue to the ſacrament; and how the reſt of the whole year they are careleſs and negligent, as if it appertained not to them but at that time only. We think it therefore moſt expedient, that the firſt Sunday of March be appointed for one time to that ſervice, the firſt Sunday of June for another, the firſt Sunday of September for the third, the firſt Sunday of December for the fourth. We do not deny but any ſeveral kirk, for reaſonable cauſes, may change the time, and may miniſter oftner; but we ſtudy to repreſs ſuperſtition."

From all which we may ſee what it was that came to be the more general, ſettled and declared mind of

of the church of Scotland after the reformatic
cerning the frequency of the Lord's ſupper, viz
ſhould at leaſt be celebrated once in the quarte
ing liberty to any miniſter or congregation to
ter it oftner, if they thought fit. Some perh
doubt if it was altogether right in our reformer
duce the primitive practice of celebrating the
ſupper once a-week to once in the month, a
wards to once in the quarter; but we are to
they had weighty reaſons for it at that time: E
are many now of the mind, that we of this ag
ſo well account for reducing the ancient practic
church in adminiſtrating this ſacrament once
quarter, to once in the year. Is not this a lar
deviating from the ſentiments and practice of c
and zealous reformers? What can our unfreq
celebrating this Chriſtian commemorating ordi
imputed to ſo much, as a ſad decay of love t
cified Jeſus? Alas, that love to our unchangea
ly Redeemer ſhould cool by length of time! V
verify what he foretold of the latter days, M
12. "Iniquity ſhall abound, and the love of m
wax cold." But oh! Are not Chriſt's benefits
as ever, his blood as freſh and efficacious as eve
then ſhould not Chriſtian love be as warm as e
their reſpect to his goſpel inſtitutions as ſtrong
O that the Chriſtians of this age were ſenſi
whence we are fallen; how far we have depar
the zeal of our anceſtors, and left our firſt lo
crucified Chriſt; ſo that all ranks were conc
revive and recover it, in and by the uſe of th
which God hath appointed for that end; that
grees we might again attain our reformers freq
celebrating this Chriſt-exalting and love-inflami
nance, and ſo change our annual to quarterly-
nions! I know it is affecting to ſome hearty w
ers of the proſperity and credit of the church
land, to think that a church, ſo excellently wel
tuted, and which had attained to a greater pitc
formation in other things than her neighbours,
yet ly behind them in this point.

I acknowledge that matters were ſo put out of order in this church, by reaſon of the long oppreſſion ſhe groaned under, and the great defections of many, before the late happy revolution, that miniſters in ſeveral places were afraid to diſpenſe this ſealing ordinance to their flocks for ſome time: And finding themſelves very much ſtraitened betwixt the indiſpoſition of their people, and the hazard of a total omiſſion, they came to an unfrequent celebration of this ordinance, perhaps but once in two or three years, till this unfrequency became cuſtomary and too general. Serious Chriſtians indeed flocked unto thoſe places where it was diſpenſed, whereby their loſs at home was in ſome meaſure repaired.

But the General Aſſembly, being ſenſible of the evil of this unfrequency, began to take notice of it, and make ſeveral excellent acts for the more frequent celebration of the Lord's ſupper, as in the years 1710, 1711, 1712, and 1724. Though theſe acts have not hitherto had their full effect, yet they have been ſo far effectual, as to bring miniſters generally to adminiſtrate this ordinance in their congregations at leaſt once in the year. I know, ſeveral worthy miniſters have ſome years ago given a laudable example to their brethren, in celebrating the Lord's ſupper in their congregations twice a-year; though indeed it is to be regretted that ſo few hitherto have copied after it.

The authority and judgment of the great Calvin (whom the church of Scotland doth moſt deſervedly regard and eſteem) concerning annual and frequent communicating, hath very great weight with me: We have it in his inſtitutions, Lib. 4. Cap. 17. Par. 46. mihi fol. 507, After he had ſhewed what was the practice of the ancient church in pureſt times, he hath theſe words: "Et ſane hæc conſuetudo quæ ſemel quotannis "communicare jubet, certiſſium eſt diaboli inventum, "cujuſcunque tandem miniſterio invecta fuerit.— "Quum certa lex de una quotannis communica- one "poſita eſt, qua factum eſt, ut fere omnes quum ſemel "communicaverunt, quaſi in reliquum anni tempus "pulchre defuncti, in utramque aurem ſecuri dormi- "ant. Longe aliter factum opportuit: Singulis ad "minimum

" minimum hebdomadibus proponenda erat Chriſtia-
" norum cœtui menſa domini, declarandæ promiſ-
" ſiones quæ nos in ea ſpiritualiter paſcerent; nullus
" quidem neceſſitate cogendus, ſed cohortandi omnes,
" & ſtimulandi; objurgandus, etiam ignavorum tor-
" por." *i. e.* " And indeed this cuſtom which com-
mands to communicate once only in the year, is moſt
certainly the invention of the devil, whoever was in-
ſtrumental to introduce it. When there was a law
made for communicating once in the year, it came to
paſs, that almoſt all, when they had once communicated,
turned ſlothful and ſlept ſecurely throughout the reſt
of the year. But it ſhould have been far otherwiſe:
Every week, at leaſt, the Lord's table ſhould have been
ſet before the aſſembly of Chriſtians, and the promiſes
therein ſet forth upon which we ſhould feed ſpiritually:
No man indeed ſhould be compelled to come by force,
but all ſhould be exhorted and excited; and the ſloth
of all the negligent reproved." And upon the margin
we have theſe words; " Papiſtica autem conſuetudo,
" quotannis ſemel communicare jubens, execrandum
" eſt inventum;" *i. e.* " The popiſh cuſtom, which
" enjoins men to communicate once a-year, is a curſed
" invention." And certainly the godly and judicious
Calvin his obſervation is moſt juſt: For when we
call our people to come to the Lord's table but once
in the year, and there believingly to remember a cru-
cified Chriſt for the remiſſion of their ſins, the moſt
part are tempted to think, when they have done that,
their main work is over for that year, and ſo fall aſleep
and turn ſecure through the reſt of the year; upon which
account he calls this *popiſh cuſtom, a curſed invention*, and
an *invention of the devil*. It is to be hoped, that the
church of Scotland, which ſo much abhors popery and
all popiſh cuſtoms, will at length throw out this of *an-
nual communicating*, as well as they have done others.

Objections anſwered.

Object. I. By divine appointment the paſſover was
celebrated but once in the year; and now the Lord's
ſupper is come in room of the paſſover.

Anſ.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, It muſt be remembered, that as the paſſover ved to ſignify and prefigure Chriſt's death and ſufings to the Jews, and their ſpiritual redemption there; ſo it was inſtituted to preſerve the memorial of eir temporal freedom and deliverance from the bonge of Egypt, which God wrought for them on the urteenth of the firſt month, Exod. xii. 17. 18 And erefore he appointed them to keep the paſſover annuly upon that day of the month. But the Lord hath ed no certain day of the year for the Lord's ſupper nder the New Teſtament times; but only in general th enjoined a frequent celebration of it.

2*dly*, The Jews did not need a very frequent celebraon of the paſſover to put them in mind of the coming, eath, and ſufferings of the Meſſiah; ſeeing, beſides the aſſover, they had, by divine appointment, many other vely types, figures, and inſtitutions, which were deigned for that very ſame end, ſuch as the ſacrifices of ain beaſts, which they frequently witneſſed in the temle: Yea, every day they had, both morning and evenig, a lamb killed in the temple, its blood poured out, nd its fleſh burnt on the altar, for a ſacrifice to God or their ſins; which did in a moſt eminent and lively anner repreſent to them the death, bloodſhed, ſufferigs, and bitter agonies of Chriſt, the great ſacrifice for e ſins of the world, juſt in the ſame manner as the aſſover did; only it was not eaten in every houſe, as at was. So that we ſee a plain reaſon why the Jews id not ſtand in need of ſuch a frequent celebration of e paſſover to be a remembrance of Chriſt under the w, as we do of the Lord's ſupper under the New Teſment times, when we have no other ordinance inſtited to keep up the remembrance of Chriſt's death and fferings, but this alone: And therefore it ought much ore frequently to be celebrated than the Jewiſh paſſer was.

3*dly*, Suppoſing the Jews had no other ordinance at the paſſover, to keep up the remembrance of the eſſiah that was to come; yet, ſeeing our Meſſiah hath ow come, and actually ſacrificed himſelf upon the oſs for our redemption, hath fully completed the

work; and made far more bright diſplays of his love and glory to us Chriſtians, than he did to the Jews under the law, and hath inſtituted the Lord's ſupper for a memorial of what he hath done and ſuffered, limiting us to no time, but injoining frequency in the uſe of it; I ſay, ſeeing the caſe is ſo with us, we are under many ſtrong ties to be more zealous and frequent in celebrating the memorials of Chriſt's love to us in the Lord's ſupper, than the Jews were to do it in the paſſover. The apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians were ſo ſenſible of this, that they thought themſelves bound to remember Chriſt crucified once a-week in their goſpel-paſſover, which the Jews did but once a-year in theirs. From all which, we ſee no argument can be brought, from the Jews annual cuſtom in celebrating the paſſover, to juſtify annual communion.

Obj. II. To adminiſtrate the Lord's ſupper frequently, would tend to diminiſh the reſpect and reverence which is due to it, and at length bring it into contempt among the people.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, If we make conſcience of our duty, our Lord will ſee to the credit of his own ordinance.

2*dly*, Will any ſay, that the apoſtles and primitive paſtors brought this ordinance into contempt by celebrating of it every Lord's day? Did they not eſteem and prize it much higher than we who celebrate it but once a-year? And why ſhould we think, that the adminiſtrating of the Lord's ſupper twice, thrice, or four times in the year, would at all derogate from the credit of it!

3*dly*, Were this reaſon valid againſt the frequent diſpenſing of this ordinance, why not againſt other ordinances alſo? And ſo we ſhould but ſeldom preach, or read the ſcriptures in the audience of the people; we ſhould ſeldom pray or ſing pſalms with our flocks, leſt we contribute to leſſen the eſteem and reverence due to theſe ordinances, by the frequent uſe of them.

4*thly*, Are not there many ſerious exerciſed Chriſtians, who communicate almoſt every Sabbath during the ſummer ſeaſon, when they can have the occaſion, in neighbouring congregations, who can tell us, that they

reap

reap ſpiritual advantage by ſo doing; that their eſteem of the ordinance is much increaſed, and that they do not at all find that their frequent partaking tends to bring this awful inſtitution into contempt with them? And why ſhould it be thought that their communicating twice, or even four times a-year, in their own congregations, at a convenient diſtance, would produce that bad effect? No: I am perſuaded it would not; for the oftner that this Sacrament is worthily received, inſtead of diminiſhing our reſpect, it increaſeth our reverence of God, and our affection to our Saviour. I am ſure, a conſcientious owning of God's authority is a greater ſign of holy reverence, than the neglect of his inſtitutions.

5*thly*, We may perhaps think to keep up the credit of this ſolemn ordinance among thoſe who are not the better ſort, by ſeldom diſpenſing it; but it ſhould be minded, that it is not true eſteem which ariſeth merely from the rarity of a thing, but that which ſpringeth from knowledge of its intrinſic worth, and experience of its uſefulneſs: And thoſe people who have no heart-acquaintance with precious Chriſt, and the ends, uſes and ſucceſs of his ordinances, will never have a due reſpect unto them. Let us by all means recommend to ſuch perſons the worth and excellency of Chriſt, ſhew them their daily need of him, and his daily uſefulneſs to them, and preſs their making ſuitable preparation, by ſearching themſelves and cloſing with him, before they be admitted to partake; and then we needed not much fear that frequency would detract from the reputation of this ordinance: For frequent experience of its uſefulneſs would beget the higheſt eſteem of it, and ſharpen the appetites of people for it. As he prayeth beſt, and with moſt delight, that prayeth ofteneſt; ſo a worthy-communicant increaſeth in the love of God and of religion, the oftner he receives: The more acquaintance and communion he attains to with Jeſus Chriſt in this ordinance, he values it ſtill the more. I cannot think this bleſſed ſacrament will be undervalued by frequent repetitions, but by perſons moſt unworthy, who ought not much to be regarded; for no true-hearted

Iſraelite would loathe this heavenly Manna, becauſe it is common, and afforded us in plenty.

Laſtly, And, with all due ſubmiſſion to others, I do ſtrongly incline to have a great regard to the judgment of the famous Mr Calvin, and many learned and godly divines, who are ſo far from thinking that annual-communicating is a mean to preſerve the eſteem of this ordinance, and prevent peoples careleſsneſs and formality in receiving, that they rather judge it a device of Satan, to cheriſh ſloth and ſecurity in ſin, to ſtifle true Chriſtian love, to diſcourage endeavours after ſerious godlineſs, and to obſtruct very much the life and continued exerciſe of religion.

Object. III. We ſee how much the other ſacrament baptiſm, is contemned, becauſe of its frequent repetition; and ſo might it alſo fare with this.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, If the peoples contempt of ſacraments be a good argument againſt the frequency of one ſacrament, it is as good againſt the frequency of another; and ſo we ought to ſet up for the adminiſtration of baptiſm but once in the year, to preſerve the eſteem and ſolemnity of it, as much as we do for that of the other ſacrament. Are they not both precious inſtitutions of the ſame Lord? Both ſeals of the ſame covenant? Why then ſhould we put the one at ſo great diſtance from the other, and ſeek to raiſe its honour ſo much above the other?

2*dly*. Though baptiſm be frequently adminiſtrate, yet the Lord doth ſtill keep up the reputation of his ordinance, ſo that no man is eaſy to be excluded from it: Yea, people generally have ſtronger impreſſions of the neceſſity of this ſacrament than of the other, notwithſtanding of all our endeavours to maintain the credit of the other more than this; which may teach us, that we ought ſtill to go on in the way of our duty, and leave it to God to ſee to the credit of his own inſtitutions.

3*dly*, It is not ſo much becauſe of the frequent adminiſtration of baptiſm, that people do ſlight it, as becauſe they, not being to partake of it themſelves, do commonly apprehend they are no more but ſpectators (though indeed, there is much more incumbent on them:) But were

:re they bound to partake frequently of this ſacra-
ent, as of the Lord's ſupper, and that under the pain
Chriſt's higheſt diſpleaſure, if they either did neglect
or perform it ſlightly; all ſober people would reckon
emſelves obliged to attend it when they had the op-
ortunity of doing it, and that with ſome awe and fear
o.

Obj. IV. There is more ſlightneſs and formality amongſt
he communicants in thoſe churches where the Lord's
upper is frequently diſpenſed, than where it is ſeldom.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, This is not generally true; for as there may
e much ſlightneſs and formality in ſome places where
t is but ſeldom diſpenſed, ſo there is much devotion
nd ſerioufneſs in other places where it is frequently
dminiſtred.

2*dly*, The peoples ſlightneſs in receiving may proceed
ery much from the paſtor's ſlightneſs in adminiſtrating.
Were due pains taken to keep back the unworthy, to
nform people of the greatneſs of the work, to warn
hem of the danger of unworthy receiving; to obſerve
aſt, preparation and thankſgiving days; to chuſe ſuit-
ble texts, preach awakening doctrine, make particular
pplication, and to fence the Lord's table with awful
olemnity: Perhaps there would not be ſuch ſlightneſs
mongſt the people in receiving.

Object. V. It will not be eaſy to get different texts and
ubjects ſuitable to ſuch frequent communions.

Anſ. A crucified Jeſus is a ſubject moſt ſuitable, and
ne ſo large and copious as cannot be exhauſted. The
poſtle, while he preached at Corinth, determined to
now nothing among that people, "but Chriſt and him
rucified," 1 Cor. ii. 2. He reſolved to make this the
reat and conſtant ſubject of his ſermons; and can a-
y think it too much to preach upon this theme, twice,
hrice, or four times a year?

Certainly a crucified Jeſus is the ſpring and ſcope,
e matter, and end, of all goſpel preaching. Every
ing we ſay is reducible to him; and the deſign of all
to exalt him, who is the great founder of our reli-
on, and the foundation of all our hopes: When we
hort *from ſins and vices*, we do it mainly becauſe they

were

were the cauſe of Chriſt's ſufferings, and do tend to crucify him afreſh: When we exhort to duty, we do it chiefly from this topic, that we ſhould live to him that died for us: and that the love of Chriſt ſhould conſtrain us to follow his pattern, and obey his precepts. We preſs duties as a neceſſary fruit of faith in Chriſt, and of love to him; and we teach, that they are only to be performed by his ſtrength, and accepted through his merits. Nay, Chriſt crucified is the ſcope and ſubſtance of the whole bible; "for to him give all the prophets witneſs," Acts x. 43.

A crucified Chriſt is a ſubject ſo pleaſant and fertile, that we cannot be ſtraitned to preach directly thereupon many times a year, if we take a view of theſe things in him, *viz.* the infinite dignity and glory of his perſon; the perfections of God that ſhine in him; the freeneſs and greatneſs of his love; his eternal undertaking; his glorious ſuretiſhip; his wonderful incarnation; his threefold office; ſignificant metaphors and types whereby Chriſt and his benefits are repreſented; his manifold ſweet relations to his people; his mediatory fulneſs; his deep humiliation; his innocent life; his holy example; his heavenly doctrine; his unparalleled ſufferings; his meritorious death; his victorious reſurrection; his triumphant aſcenſion; his prevalent interceſſion; his glorious coming again: The excellency of that covenant he hath confirmed; the ſufficiency of the ſacrifice he hath offered; the neceſſity and completeneſs of the righteouſneſs he hath wrought; the innumerable benefits of his death; the unſearchable riches of his grace; his exceeding great and precious promiſes; the incomparable virtue of his blood; our union with him by faith; our adoption by relation to him; our juſtification by his merit; our ſanctification by his ſpirit; our fighting and conquering under his banner; our protection under his ſhadow; our bearing burdens by his grace; our performing duties by his ſtrength; our holy walk in obedience to his injunctions; the thankfulneſs we owe to him in heart and life; and the ſweet communion believers have with him in duties and ordinances. Yea, we have bleſſings unſpeakable, grace and glory, peace and pardon, light and

and life, ſtrength and growth, riches and wiſdom, joy and hope, perſeverance in grace, comfort in affliction, conduct in life, through-bearing at death, reſurrection from the grave, abſolution at the tribunal, happineſs through eternity, and all things coming to us with and by a crucified Jeſus. So that in this noble ſubject there is a perpetual plenty and variety of ſuitable matter for ſacramental occaſions.

Object. VI. To adminiſter the Lord's Supper ſo frequently would occaſion very much labour and toil to the adminiſtrators.

Anſ. 1*ſt.* Did we diſpenſe this ſacrament more frequently, probably the labour and toil would be leſſened; we might come to find our people habitually in a better caſe for that ſolemn ordinance than at preſent generally they are: So that leſs pains, in exciting, inſtructing and preparing them for it, might be more ſucceſsful than greater is now.

2*dly*, We have no cauſe to diſtruſt our faithful and kind Lord, who doth not fail to give ſtrength and furniture to his ſervants as their needs require, according to his gracious promiſe, Deut. xxxiii. 25. "As thy days ſo ſhall thy ſtrength be." We have experience hitherto of his pitying our weakneſs, ſupplying our wants, and helping us in time of need: So that we may aſſure ourſelves that he will ſend none to warfare upon their own charges.

3*dly*, If we put the glory of our maſter, the advantage of our people, and the increaſe of our reward, in the balance with our labour; I hope we will not think it deſerveth once to be mentioned. Though we had no more to expect, it is a great reward in itſelf, to be honoured, to bring glory to our Redeemer, and to advance the ſalvation of immortal ſouls: And ſeeing the ſeaſon of our capacity for either is ſo very ſhort, with what chearfulneſs ſhould we beſtir ourſelves to ply that bleſſed work? What a pleaſure would it be to ſee Chriſt in eſteem, ſin in diſgrace, the world in contempt, and religion in proſperity amongſt men? Well, then, would we contribute thereto in our ſtation; would we have a lively remembrance of God, and Chriſt, and heaven,

kept

kept up in the world; would we have our people closely and conſtantly to bear in mind the evil of ſin, the preciouſneſs of immortal ſouls, the love of God to mankind ſinners, the death and ſufferings of the ſon of God in our room:—Let us frequently adminiſter the Lord's ſupper in our congregations.

Would we help the carleſsneſs of our peoples minds, and the weakneſs of their memories; would we give our hearers a compendious and affecting view of the Chriſtian religion; would we bring them to have freſh and laſting impreſſions of its truths and doctrines, we know no more effectual means for it: For, in this ſolemn ordinance, we have man's fall and diſeaſe, together with his recovery and remedy, ſet forth to the life; and that in ſuch a way as makes impreſſion on the outward ſenſes, ſo that the eye may affect the heart.

Would we have ſin and vice kept under conſtant rebukes among our people, let us keep their eyes always fixed upon the bleeding wounds of a crucified Jeſus. Would we have them carefully to maintain family religion, ſecret duties, and a holy tender walk; let us conſtrain them to it, by the love of a dying Jeſus frequently ſet before their eyes in this ordinance. This through the divine bleſſing, would be an excellent means and help to carry about with us always the dying of the Lord Jeſus, and to make the print of his wounds deep and laſting on our hearts.

If we duly ponder theſe things, I hope it will appear, that the advantage of the frequent celebration of the Lord's ſupper will abundantly recompenſe our ſmall coſt and pains.

Object. VII. The unworthineſs of the people is a great diſcouragement to the frequent celebration of the Lord's ſupper amongſt them: We have but few that are in any meaſure fit to be admitted to it.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, If this reaſon were valid, it would conclude as ſtrongly againſt the diſpenſing of this ordinance at all, as againſt the frequency of it: And we know, an argument that would prove too much proves nothing.

2*dly*, I know many are unworthy, but all are not alike; and the unfitneſs of many cannot excuſe us from adminiſtrating

adminiſtrating to thoſe that are in ſome meaſure fit. As it is a ſin for parents to keep back from their children their due and neceſſary food, becauſe of ſome unworthy perſons that are in the family: So it is a ſin to withold the ſoul-nouriſhing meal from thoſe of their people that have a right to it: For, though not a few do ſlight and abuſe it, yet there are others hungry and needful of it: And theſe ought not to be denied the advantage of frequent partaking, for the fault of their neighbours.

It is the ſaying of one, That we find fault upon good ground with the Papiſts for denying one of the elements to the people; And how can we juſtify thoſe that deny both elements to their people, at leaſt for a long time?

3dly, Though the number of our communicants be ſmall, that ſhould not diſcourage us from our duty; for the divine bleſſing is not tyed to numbers. God did own the inſtitution of the paſſover, tho' there were but few that eat it together; and our bleſſed Saviour had but a ſmall number that did partake with him at the firſt communion: But, for our encouragement in that caſe, he graciouſly promiſeth, that, "where two or three are met together in his name, he will own them with his preſence and bleſſing."

Object. VIII. To adminiſtrate this ſacrament ſo frequently as before mentioned, would require conſiderable expences to furniſh communion-elements, and otherwiſe; and we have no ſufficient fund for that charge.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, Tho' we ſhould be put to more charge this way than formerly, I hope no faithful miniſter will ſay, that this conſideration ſhould be laid in balance with the glory of God, and good of ſouls; we ſhould all be willing to ſpend and be ſpent for Chriſt: And whatever we expend of our private good this way, is ſurely lent to the Lord, who will repay it.

2*dly*, The law provides a fund in every pariſh for ſuch expences; and, where it is not ſettled, our judges are very favourable to the church, and give a liberal allowance to ſuch miniſters as do apply for it: And, no doubt, if the ſacrament were more frequently celebrated, they would not grudge to augment the fund, when it is not ſufficient.

3*dly*, If a ſufficient fund cannot be had otherw let collections be made in pariſhes for defraying charge, as Euſebius tells us was done by the primi Chriſtians in this caſe: and ſurely there is no ho hearted Chriſtian or communicant but would contril liberally for that effect, rather than the Lord's w ſhould be hindered.

Laſtly, We may ſee, from the old acts of Aſſem that the General Aſſembly 1638 had this very obj tion under their conſideration, and declareth, that charges ſhould rather be paid out of that day's col tion, than that the congregation want the more frequ uſe of the ſacrament. But I hope the General Aſſ blies of this church will in due time take this and ot objections under further conſideration, provide effec anſwers and remedies thereunto; ſo that this ſolemn dinance ſhall be more frequently celebrated amongſt than it is at preſent: And I wiſh all may pray ferv ly, that, together with the foreſaid laudable prac ſomething of the warm love and zeal of the anci Chriſtians may be happily revived in our land.

Before I conclude this preface, there is another th I would advertiſe the reader, that in the following t tiſe I have endeavoured to keep by the form of ſo words in uſe amongſt us, avoiding both the extre of Antinomianiſm and Legaliſm, ſeeing the princi of this church do guide us equally to evite both the and the other. And it muſt be acknowledged, tha is not eaſy to ſhun theſe extremes; for people c monly, when their zeal is excited againſt one extre are in great hazard of ſliding inſenſibly into the ot according to the old proverb, *Dum vitant ſtulti vitia contraria currunt*. And indeed, not only fools, ſome of the greateſt and wiſeſt of men, have erre this reſpect: It was Mr Baxter's zeal and great k neſs againſt Antinomianiſm, that drove him to ſ raſh and dangerous aſſertions on the other ſide. this ſhould be a warning to us, always to take hee ourſelves, and be careful to guard on all ſides; for are ſtill in hazard this way, and eſpecially when thi come to warm diſputations with us.

It is poſſible that ſome who preach the goſpel, may pick out ſome of the glorious truths thereof; ſuch as, "The freedom of grace in the ſalvation of ſinners, our juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, as our ſurety, the excellency of faith in Chriſt, the privileges of the covenant, and bleſſings of Chriſt's purchaſe, and may make theſe truths almoſt the only ſubject of their preaching; and yet perhaps manage them ſo unhappily, as not to lead people to ſtudy regeneration of heart, holineſs of life, abhorrence of ſin, tenderneſs of walk, and the conſcientious practice of all commanded duties. And ſurely in this way of doing they in a great meaſure miſs the deſign of our Saviour's incarnation, and the end of the doctrine of grace, which is, "to deſtroy the works of the devil, and to teach men to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world."

On the other hand, it is as poſſible that others may inſiſt very much in enforcing morality, and make very fine rational harangues of its excellency; and yet make little uſe of goſpel-motives to preſs it, and be at little pains to ſhew the goſpel-principles from whence it muſt proceed. Likewiſe they may preach much againſt vice and immorality, and warn people of the evil of it; and yet take up but little time to teach them concerning the root and ſpring of vice, (viz. our fall in Adam, and the corruption of our natures) and the neceſſity of an inward change by a work of regeneration, for healing of the inward diſeaſe and plague of the heart. Alſo they may preſs holy duties very much, and yet make little mention of the true fountain and ſource of holineſs, (viz. our union with Chriſt by faith, and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt,) and ſpeak little of the neceſſity of Chriſt's blood to waſh our performances. Now both theſe extremes, in the way of preaching, are equally to be avoided.

It is a prevailing conceit among many, that there is no more requiſite to make a man a Chriſtian than morality, or a blameleſs walk before men. Morality indeed is a very comely thing, and moſt neceſſary both to beautify and preſerve human ſocieties; and therefore it is to be wiſhed there were much more of it in

e there is; and every preacher of
rongly to recommend the practice
s certain that morality is not suffi-
an a Christian, seeing it hath been
ens, and those that were ignorant of
way of salvation through faith in him.
indeed doth enforce morality and moral
e strongest motives and arguments; but, in
me, it teacheth us that these virtues are ne-
acceptable to God, until they be the fruit
's operation, and spring from their proper
ith in Christ, and love to him: They must
in Christ as their root, have a new principle
them, and a new end to direct them, before
can commence Christian graces. Unre-
morality will never please God: Let men ad-
never so far, yet, till the heart be renewed, it
but nature at best; and the fruit is always sour
grows not upon the root Christ: It can never be
unto God, while Christ's strength and Spi-
ought and employed in it, nor his righteous-
cover it. So that there is a great difference be-
morality and gospel-holiness.

man, then, though he profess himself a
yet he really is not so, if he lives not as one
for and receives daily influences from Christ;
not Christ still in his undertakings, duties and
be not saying, "How empty and vain
without Christ! Yea, though I could
much, I should be utterly lost and undone,
for Christ my surety, and his righteous-
count all but loss and dung, that I may be
him."

his church a good many years ago manifested much
Antinomianism, and doctrines which seem-
that way. And surely it is incumbent upon
to watch and take care, that the obliga-
to be [illegible] and good works, and to
[illegible] the first and second table
[illegible] weakened by the preacher
[illegible] pretext of exalting
fre

ree grace; ſeeing free grace and ſtrict holineſs do nobly conſiſt together.

Again, on the other hand, it ſhould equally be the church's concern to labour to prevent the ſpreading of legaliſm, or the preaching of morality and the practice of duties in a legal ſtrain; that is, in a way tending to the neglect of Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, or to the diſparagement of the doctrine of free grace. It was the flagrant reports of the abounding of that ſort of moral preaching, eſpecially among younger clergymen, that occaſioned the bringing in an overture to the General Aſſembly 1726, for an act to diſcourage the ſame, and to direct to the right method of preaching Chriſt, and how to preach morality in an evangelical ſtrain. But, though endeavours were uſed by ſeverals to get this overture turned into an act, it was hindered by ſome leading men, leſt it ſhould reflect upon the characters of ſome preachers to whom they had reſpect; ſo that an act of this kind could never be got brought to a bearing until the Aſſembly 1736: And then thoſe who were moſt zealous to promote the act, in order to get it the more unanimouſly agreed to, were fain to drop out of its preamble the true cauſe of making it, namely, the abounding of legal preaching in the land, or of a wrong ſtrain of preaching the goſpel. But, notwithſtanding of this, the act itſelf is of excellent uſe, if duly regarded and put in execution; and without this the beſt acts in the world ſignify nothing. O that I could perſuade all miniſters and preachers of the goſpel to conſider and obſerve the foreſaid act! It would ſurely fare the better, both with themſelves and their hearers: And, if no more may be done for that purpoſe, let me at leaſt uſe ſome means to get the act made known to them, by tranſcribing it in this place.

VII. Act concerning Preaching.

Edinburgh, May 21. 1736. *Seſſ.* 8.

"THE General Aſſembly, being moved with zeal for the honour of God and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, eſpecially at a time when the Chriſtian revelation is openly

openly impugned, and infidelity, deiſm, and othe
rors do ſo much prevail: They do hereby recomm
to all miniſters and preachers, ſeriouſly to conſider
obſerve the directory of this church concerning
preaching of the word, which is approven by the
neral Aſſembly 1645: And, in particular, that the
careful to warn their hearers againſt any thing ten
to Atheiſm, Deiſm, Arianiſm, Socinianiſm, A
nianiſm, Bourignianiſm, Popery, Superſtition, A
nomianiſm, or any other errors. And that, in t
ſermons, they inſiſt frequently upon the truth,
neſſity and excellency of ſupernatural revelation,
ſupreme Deity of the Son and Holy Ghoſt, as
as of the Father; together with the Oneneſs of
Godhead, our ſinful and loſt eſtate by nature, the
ceſſity of ſupernatural grace, and of faith in the r
treſſneſs of Chriſt, without which the beſt w
cannot pleaſe God: And that they make it the g
ſcope of their ſermons, to lead ſinners from a c
nant of works to a covenant of grace for life and
vation, and from ſin and ſelf to precious Chriſt.
the General Aſſembly recommends to all who pre
the goſpel, when they handle the doctrines of God's
deeming love, and of his free grace in the juſtifica
and ſalvation of ſinners, the bleſſings of the Redeem
purchaſe, and privileges of the new and better c
nant, to ſtudy to manage theſe ſubjects, ſo as to l
their hearers unto an abhorrence of ſin, the love of
and our neighbours, and the practice of univerſal h
neſs; ſeeing it is one great end of the goſpel, to deſ
the works of the devil, and to teach men to live ſob
ly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent world. U
which account, it is incumbent on all who preach
goſpel, to inſiſt not only upon the neceſſity and ex
lency of faith in Jeſus Chriſt for ſalvation, but alſo
on the neceſſity of repentance for ſin, and reforma
from it; and to preſs the practice of all moral du
both with reſpect to the firſt and ſecond table of
law, as indiſpenſibly neceſſary, in obedience to G
command, to teſtify our gratitude to him, to evide
the ſincerity of our faith, and for the benefit of

tian ſociety, the adorning the profeſſion of religion, and making us meet for eternal life, ſeeing without holineſs no man can ſee the Lord.

"And the Aſſembly do ſeriouſly recommend to all miniſters and preachers of the goſpel, that in preſſing moral duties, or obedience to the law, they ſhew the nature and excellency of goſpel-holineſs, and enforce conformity to the moral law, both in heart and life, not from principles of reaſon only, but alſo and more eſpecially of revelation. And, in order to attain thereto, it is neceſſary to ſhew men the corruption and depravity of human nature by their fall in Adam, and their natural impotence for, and averſion to, what is ſpiritually good, and to lead them to the true and only ſource of all grace and holineſs, viz union with Chriſt, by the holy Spirit's working faith in us, and renewing us more and more after the image of God: And to let their hearers know, that they muſt firſt be grafted into Chriſt as their root, before their fruit can be ſavoury unto God; that they muſt have a new principle to animate, and a new end to direct them, before their actions become gracious and acceptable in the ſight of God: And that they teach them the neceſſity of living by faith on the Son of God, in a conſtant looking to and dependance upon him as the great Author of all gracious influences, for the performance of every duty: And withal, that after their beſt performances and attainments, they muſt count them but loſs and dung in point of juſtification before God; and to make it their great deſire only to be found in Chriſt and his righteouſneſs. And that miniſters, in the application of their ſermons, do endeavour rightly to divide the word of truth, ſpeaking diſtinctly to ſuch various caſes of the converted and unconverted, as ariſe natively from the ſubjects they have been handling; and that, in the whole of their diſcourſes, they take care to ſuit themſelves to the capacity of their hearers, as to matter, method, and expreſſion; and to the prevailing ſins of the time and place, with all prudent and zealous freedom and plainneſs: As alſo, that they make goſpel-ſubjects their main theme and ſtudy, and preſs with all earneſtneſs the practice of moral duties

ties in a goſpel-manner: And that they forbear vering any thing in public, that may tend more muſement than edification; and beware of brin into their ſermons and public diſcourſes, matter doubtful diſputation, which tend to gender ſtrife ra than to promote the edification of Chriſtians. the Aſſembly exhort all to ſtudy to maintain the unit the Spirit in the bond of peace.

" And, finally, the General Aſſembly recommend all profeſſors of divinity, to uſe their beſt endeavour have the ſtudents under their care well acquainted v the true method of preaching the goſpel, as above rected: And that preſbyteries, at their privy cenſu enquire concerning the obſervation of this act."

Now, bleſſed be the Lord that there is ſuch a pu act in record, as a ſtanding witneſs for Chriſt in midſt of all our backſlidings and defections! May put it in the hearts of all who preach the goſpel am us, to obſerve the directions of it; that the ſcope tendency of their ſermons may ſtill be to exalt Chr and raiſe him above all in the buſineſs of our ſalvatio to preſs the doctrine of regeneration and the new bir to preach up juſtification by Chriſt's righteouſneſs lone, apprehended by faith, and the neceſſity of the ward operations of the holy Spirit, which Chriſt h purchaſed and promiſed for working that faith in and for bringing about the gracious change of the n birth, and carrying on a work of ſanctification in and for enabling us to live the ſpiritual life! This be the ſcope of the act, happy were it for the land if were alſo the main ſcope of our ſermons. But, af all, if profeſſors of divinity do not their part in tra ing up ſtudents according to it, and if preſbyteries not theirs in calling to account thoſe who do not ſerve the act, the church will not reap much benefit it, as I fear ſhe hath not yet done: For, if ſhe h " what meaneth the bleating of the ſheep," and " lowing of the oxen," which we ſtill hear? What me the murmuring of ſerious Chriſtians from ſeveral c ners, for want of the proper food of their ſouls? W

m

ſpeak the continued complaints of the growth of Deiſm and infidelity through the land? It is a juſt obſerve, That, when moral preaching in a Chriſtleſs way doth much abound, it makes way for the increaſe of Deiſm and infidelity: For when perſons do long hear moral ſermons, and little of Chriſt in them, or the peculiar doctrines of Chriſtianity, they are tempted to think there is but little difference between them and the diſcourſes of Seneca and other heathen moraliſts; and therefore, that they may be ſafe enough, and win to heaven, without Chriſtianity at all, and that every moral man is a good enough Chriſtian.

Oh! this is a fundamental defection, of moſt heinous guilt; it is a God-provoking and unchurching evil, which all the miniſters and lovers of Chriſt ſhould be deeply concerned about: For if we ſuffer ourſelves and others to fall from our regard and love to glorious Chriſt, neglect to exalt him in our ſermons, and to preach ſalvation to men only through Chriſt's ſuretiſhip and ſacrifice, and to tell the world, and inculcate it daily upon them, that this, and this only, is the way for them to obtain pardon, peace, grace, glory, and every good thing; I ſay, if we turn careleſs and negligent in what ſo nearly concerns Chriſt's glory, and our own office as Chriſtian preachers, may he not juſtly plead a controverſy with our church, ſmite us with the moſt awful judgments, ſuffer a flood of infidelity, error and profanity to invade us, withdraw his ſpirit from ordinances and judicatories, infatuate our counſels and conduct, mingle a perverſe ſpirit in the midſt of us, and give us up to the moſt unnatural diviſions and mournful breaches among ourſelves? Ah, how much is this the caſe with us at this day! And no wonder, ſeeing Chriſt's glory is ſo little minded, notwithſtanding of the foreſaid excellent act of Aſſembly, and many other good acts, that are ſadly neglected this day by miniſters and preachers among us. And how can we expect that any individual man ſhould pay regard to them, and particularly to the 7th act of Aſſembly 1736, concerning preaching, when he ſees whole judicatories pay no reſpect to the 14th act of that aſſembly againſt intruſions, nor to the 10th act of

Aſſembly 1712, and the 9th act of Aſſembly 1715, concerning the uſurpation of patronage upon the church and her right of calling her own miniſters; which acts are conform to other ancient acts of this church, and to our reformation-principles declared in *ſecond book of Diſcipline (ſee chap.* 3. *Par.* 4. and 5. *chap.* 12. *Par.* 9 and 10.) and which are ſworn to in our *national covenant*, and ratified by many acts both of church and ſtate.

Now, how ſtrange and ſurprizing is it; to ſee men deliberately going contrary to theſe excellent acts and deeds of the church, both ancient and modern, (which are well founded upon the word of God and ſound reaſon) by drawing on the yoke of patronage upon the church without neceſſity, voluntarily ſtrengthening the hands of patrons in their ſpiritual tyranny, and encouraging men in that vile church-breaking and ſoul-deſtroying practice of *accepting preſentations*, (which no law doth require) and adhering to them in oppoſition to the people's choice? And yet this way is continued, even after conviction, by long dear-bought experience, of the pernicious effects of it. I well remember the time (yea, it is not above twenty years ago) when it was thought to be the univerſal opinion, that accepting of preſentations was inconſiſtent with Preſbyterian principles, and the rights and rules of this church, which we are ſolemnly engaged to maintain by our *Formula* 1711, and otherwiſe: At that time, *preſentation-hunters* among Preſbyterians would have appeared as monſters, and their ſociety frightful; but now, alas! they are become tame and familiar creatures to us. It is this woful practice, together with the itch of pleaſing great men, that hath of late been the great ſnare to draw in judicatories to go croſs to our declared principles maintained in this church ever ſince the Reformation, (which we ſhould have firmly cleaved to, and never declined from in any caſe) by making *intruſions* and *violent ſettlements* in Chriſtian congregations, to the ruin, alas! of the glorious goſpel, and of precious ſouls therein: And upon that account alone, tho' we had no acts nor declared principles againſt intruſions, it is aſtoniſhing to think how any man,

man, that hath the glory of his maſter and the ſaving of ſouls at heart, ſhould ever concur in a violent ſettlement that is manifeſtly deſtructive to both. That is an awful threatening to miniſters, Jer. xxiii. "Wo be unto the paſtors that deſtroy and ſcatter the ſheep of my paſture, ſaith the Lord:" And yet, notwithſtanding, we ſee many, who go under the character of wiſe men, ſtill perſiſting in that miſerable infatuation and deſtructive courſe, driving multitudes of hearty friends and ſerious Chriſtians out of the church, and never gaining any to it of thoſe they intend to gratify; yet acting as if they were joined in conſpiracy againſt the Commons of Scotland, and were carrying on a plot to ſtrengthen the ſeceſſion from the church. But let me tell theſe wiſe brethren, if our conventions and parliaments had paid ſo little regard to the inclinations of the people of Scotland, as our judicatories do now, we would not have had theſe courts at this day to ſit in. I ſhall not inſiſt here upon this melancholy ſubject, having ſaid ſo much on it elſewhere: Only let me add this word, if leading men go on in theſe methods, though they may enjoy their eaſe, power and preferments, for a while; yet upon their grave-ſtone it is too likely it may be written, "Here lye the men, who did deſtroy the moſt beautiful national church and conſtitution that was in the world."

But, alas! we have cauſe not only to lament our departing from reformation-principles, and weakening the eſtabliſhment, but alſo ſhameful defection from vital and practical religion. The power of godlineſs is at a very low ebb among us, and little of God's ſpirit is to be found in our adminiſtrations: God is angry, and threatens to caſt us off. Ah! great ground have we to bewail our mournful caſe, and cry with the prophet, under the fearful tokens of God's anger, Jer. xiv. Lam. v. "Haſt thou utterly rejected Judah? Hath thy ſoul loathed Zion? Why haſt thou ſmitten us, and there is no healing for us? We looked for peace, and there is no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble. We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedneſs, and the iniquity of our fathers: For we have ſinned againſt thee. Do not abhor us, for thy name's ſake; do not

diſgrace the throne of thy glory: Remember, break not thy covenant with us. The anger of the Lord hath divided us. The crown hath fallen from our head: Wo unto us that we have ſinned. Wherefore doſt thou forget us for ever, forſake us ſo long time? Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we ſhall be turned: Renew our days as of old." There are many other paſſages in Jeremiah's writings very ſuitable to our preſent caſe, ſuch as Jer. xii. 10. 11. "Many paſtors have deſtroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleaſant portion a deſolate wilderneſs. They have made it deſolate, and, being deſolate, it mourneth unto me." Well, what can the ſons of Zion do for their mother in ſuch diſtreſs? They muſt even bring her caſe to the phyſician of Iſrael, when it is wholly deſperate and incurable as to human help, and cry, as in Pſal. lx. 2. "O God, give us help from trouble; for vain is the help of man." Let us fall in with Chriſt's call to the man with the lunatic child, whom his diſciples could not cure, Matt. xvii. Bring him hither to me, ſaith our Lord. Let us bring the caſe to Chriſt, when it is deſperate and incurable by all others. The church's extremity is Chriſt's opportunity: He can help her, even then when all her friends are going with their hands on their loins in the greateſt anguiſh and trouble; according to that word, Jer. xxx. 6. 7. "wherefore do I ſee every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travel, and all faces are turned into paleneſs? Alas! for that day is great, ſo that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble." Yet even then, when Jacob's trouble comes to that extremity that none can match it, the Lord pities and adds that word, "But he ſhall be ſaved out of it." A matchleſs trouble cannot nonplus his ſaving ſkill. Now, how doth he ſave Jacob out of ſuch extremities? Not by human might or power, but by his own ſpirit, Zech. iv. 6. O that God would help all Zion's friends pleading with him for an out-pouring of his ſpirit upon miniſters, preachers, ſtudents, and all ranks, for ſaving his covenanted land out of extreme diſtreſs, and reviving primitive Chriſtianity among us! This, and nothing

elſe,

life, will do it. O that he would ſpeak ſuch a comfortable word to Scotland, as that he ſaid to the Jews when their ſtate was low, Hag. ii. 5. "According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, ſo my Spirit remaineth among you:" Fear ye not! He hath remembered his covenant with Scotland in former times, and ſurpriſed our fathers with gracious effuſions of his Spirit: Let us ſteadily look up to him, who hath ſtill bowels of pity, and can help us as well as others in diſtreſs.

We have heard of the wonderful goodneſs of the Lord of late, in pitying other nations and countries, when under great darkneſs, deadneſs and diſtreſs, by ſending down his Spirit to revive his work among them in an extraordinary manner, which may be ground of hope to others. How glorious was the appearance of his ſovereign grace about eight or nine years ago in Saltzburg in Germany, in determining about twenty thouſand of the inhabitants to embrace the reformed religion, merely by reading of the bible; yea, and to become ſo zealous for it, as to be willing to forſake houſes, lands, temporal goods, and relations, and all they had in the world, that they might enjoy the preaching of the goſpel.

How marvelouſly did he diſplay the riches of his grace, and the work of his Spirit, in the wonderful converſions of great numbers in Northampton, and other parts of New England, by the miniſtry of Mr Jonathan Edwards, and others in that country, about five or ſix years ago, of which we had a well atteſted narrative publiſhed among us?

Nay, within theſe two years we have moſt ſurpriſing accounts of the goings of our God, and the effuſions of his Spirit on ſeveral places of Old England and Wales, our neighbouring countries, where, by the miniſtry of Mr George Whitefield, Mr John Weſley, and others (who inſiſt mainly on the doctrine of the new birth, and juſtification by faith in Chriſt) great numbers, even of the moſt profligate, are convinced and pricked in their hearts, and brought to cry out, "What ſhall we

do

do to be ſaved?" Which extraordinary work I hear doth ſtill continue in divers places of England.

And this very ſame year we have the like accounts from Georgia, New-Jerſey, Penſilvania, New-York, and other of the Engliſh plantations in America, by the miniſtry of Mr Whitfield and others. Likewiſe, we have very ſtrange accounts of the ſucceſs of the goſpel in many different parts of the world, even among the heathens, by Count Zinzendorf, biſhop of the Moravian church, and his miſſionaries.

Verily theſe good news which we now hear, of God's glorious appearances in the goſpel, do look as if God was about to accompliſh his promiſes to his church in the later days, "When the whole earth ſhall be full of the knowledge of the Lord." O how refreſhing are the remoteſt dawnings of the glory of theſe days!

Alſo, they ſerve to teach us how eaſy it is for God to riſe up, when he pleaſeth, for the revival of his work in decayed churches, when their caſe ſeems to be very hopeleſs. How eaſy is it for him to raiſe up inſtruments to preach his goſpel with ſuch life and power, as to awaken whole towns and countries of ſleepy ſinners together to hearken to the goſpel-call? He can make a nation to be born at once; which ſhould encourage us to wait on him ſtill. And now when our bleſſed Lord is graciouſly pleaſed to mount his white horſe, as king of Zion, and make his circuit in our countries, to give ſuch evidences of his glorious power, and ſend down pleaſant ſhowers of his grace among them, and make many to bow down at his feet: May we not hope that he hath a great work on the wheels, and is on his march to go through his church in a conquering manner, to confound deiſts and infidels, and quell the daring boldneſs of his adverſaries? And, in that caſe, may not Scotland look for a viſit from him among the reſt, and even plead that ancient kindneſs may revive towards it? May we not draw hope from the ſecond Pſalm, and other ſcripture-paſſages, where God promiſeth to "give his ſon the uttermoſt parts of the earth for a poſſeſſion; and that the iſles ſhall ſee his ſalvation, and wait for his law," among which places Scotland certainly is? And

though

nough it be a land that is little and deſpiſed among he nations, yet he, whoſe thoughts are not like man's houghts, hath ſhewed a diſtinguiſhing reſpect to it, by his early ſending the goſpel to it; and, when overſpread with darkneſs, promoting reformation in it againſt both the power of the mighty, and counſels of the crafty; nay, advancing reformation ſo far, and making goſpel-light ſo clear and powerful in it, by the remarkable down-pouring of his Spirit, that Scotland was noticed by divines of other places, and called *Philadelphia*, and the *morning ſtar of the reformation*. Nay, he took Scotland into covenant with himſelf in a peculiar manner, and gave ſingular tokens of his preſence with his people: He hath wonderfully appeared for the intereſt of religion, when almoſt ſunk in it: He hath raiſed up ſaviours on our mount Zion, and brought about great deliverances for it (as for Iſrael of old) when grievouſly oppreſſed and brought low. And, from theſe ancient and peculiar proofs of our Redeemer's care, may we not humbly hope that he will not leave the land that is given him by his Father, and ſolemnly devoted to him by its inhabitants?

Our decays and backſlidings from God, indeed, are very great, fearful, and threatening; yet, he hath ſtill left a mourning and praying remnant in the land, who are ſenſible of the want of his Spirit and preſence in ordinances, deſire to lament after the Lord, and cry for all the abominations that are found in the midſt of the city: And though her deſolations are mournful, the breaches in her walls many, and the glory of the Lord is gone up from the cherub; yet it ſeems ſtill to hover and ſtand over the threſhold of the door, and there is a remnant among us wreſtling and pleading againſt his departure. There is a number who take pleaſure in our Zion, have a kindneſs for her ſtones and rubbiſh, and ceaſe not to lift up a prayer for the remnant that is left: And we ſee gracious promiſes made to the prayers and tears, wreſtlings and witneſſings, of a ſmall godly remnant, Pſal. xii. 5. Pſal. cii. 13. 14. 17. Alas, that this remnant in our land is ſo ſadly broken and divided in the way and manner of their witneſſing at this day! O

that

that the meek Jeſus, who rules in Zion, would meeken all their hearts, ſave from a ſpirit of bitterneſs, and from dangerous extremes in ſeparating from one another! O that the God of peace, that hath the command of hearts, would unite his broken remnant together, give them a Chriſt-like ſpirit, and make them one ſtick in his hand! It is no wiſe difficult to him to accompliſh this union, even when the caſe is moſt hopeleſs in our eyes, and inſtruments to mediate for healing breaches are out of ſight. Let us remember and plead that promiſe, Jer. xxx. 17. "For I will reſtore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, ſaith the Lord, becauſe they have called thee an outcaſt, ſaying, This is Zion whom no man ſeeketh after." Many of God's worthies, now in glory, have gone off the ſtage in the belief and hopes, that God would yet ariſe and have mercy on his Zion, that he would ſignally build her up, and appear in his glory; yea, that there would be more glorious goſpel-days ſeen in Scotland, than either we or our fathers have beheld. Surely theſe conſiderations may encourage God's remnant in Scotland, to wait and pray in hope, however dark and cloudy our day be at preſent.

In the meantime, let us rejoice and bleſs the Lord, that he is pleaſed to pour out his Spirit, make bare his holy arm, and glorify his power in other parts of the world, yea, and get himſelf a great name amongſt thoſe that have not known him, whatever he doth with us: May his right hand, and holy arm, get him the victory among them more and more, that we may hear goſpel-ſongs from the uttermoſt parts of the earth?——Likewiſe, let us mourn for thoſe ſins, both old and late, which provoke God to make our heavens as braſs, and to withhold thoſe pleaſant ſhowers from us he is letting fall upon others: And let us plead that Scotland, which formerly was the glory of all lands, for the effuſions of the Spirit, may not now be paſt by and left behind all others. O let not her fleece be dry, when many others have their fleeces wet; and, when they are getting abundance of rain, may we have a little cloud appearing like a man's hand, to prognoſticate a ſhower a coming! May the Lord riſe up from his place, and come mercifully

ully to decide the quarrel between Deiſts and us; and et Infidels, and the profane ſcoffers of theſe laſt days, ſee, that the bible is the word of God, and that the preaching of it is his inſtitution; that there is a ſupernatural power attending it, for changing mens hearts as well as lives! May he let the world ſee, it is not fine moral harangues, nor the enticing words of mens wiſdom; but the plain preaching of a crucified Jeſus, is the only remedy for loſt ſinners, that become the power of God to the converſion and ſalvation of men!"

But ſome have their queſtions, "By whom ſhall Jacob ariſe? Will he ſhew wonders to the dead? Shall the dead ariſe and praiſe him?" Theſe, indeed, are nonpluſſing difficulties to us, but none at all to him who raiſeth the dead, and calleth the things which be not, as though they were. He hath ſtill ſpirit and clay enough for new inſtruments; yea, he can make ſtrangers build up his walls, and the greateſt enemies become zealous for his glory. And, however unlikely the appearance of things may be at preſent, both ſcripture and experience aſſure us, that the time of God's peoples extremity (as I ſaid before) is his uſual ſeaſon of appearing for them: "It is in the mount that the Lord will be ſeen;" ſo may the text be rendered, Gen. xxii. 14. God did not appear any way for Iſaac's deliverance all the three days journey he made with his father, till he came to the top of the mount, and was juſt ready to be ſacrificed: Neither did he interpoſe for the Jews in Eſther's time, until the decree was paſt, and day fixed, and but a hair-breadth betwixt them and ruin; then God ſteps in, and poſts are inſtantly diſpatched to ſtop the execution. Thus the Lord acts agreeably to his promiſe, Deut. xxxii. 36. "For the Lord ſhall judge his people, and repent himſelf for his ſervants, when he ſeeth that their power is gone, and there is none ſhut up or left." Here, then, is food for faith and prayer in the moſt ſtraitening times. O for grace to pray in hope, mourn in hope, labour in hope, and wait in hope, ſeeing our deareſt Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who is our hope, is gone up, and ſits at the helm! O when ſhall the power of this great Lord be preſent to heal us! Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly. *Amen.*

INTRODUCTION.

It being our great buſineſs in the world, to pr
God's glory and our own ſalvation, and, in order
to, to ſeek acquaintance with, and ſecure an inte
the Lord Jeſus Chriſt (the ſole mediator betwixt
and men) and alſo to labour for the comfortable
ſuaſion and aſſurance of this intereſt; it hath p
God, for our aſſiſtance in this matter, graciouſly
ſcribe to us the uſe of ſeveral outward means,
word, ſacraments, and prayer, and alſo promi
inward influences of his Holy Spirit, for making
means effectual for the ends foreſaid, to ſuch as
entiouſly attend them and uſe them.

The ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper, one of
means, being inſtituted by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,
bright repreſentation and compend of the whole
tian religion, and an ordinance nobly adapted for
rying on the ends of God's glory, and our ſouls
tion, and particularly for clearing up our inter
Chriſt, and improving our acquaintance with hi
highly concerns every Chriſtian to make conſcien
attending in a due and ſuitable manner.

I have elſewhere ſhown, that the Lord's day is
vine appointment, and the celebration of the L
ſupper is the proper work of this day, and one ſ
deſign of its firſt inſtitution. Now, if ordinary ſab
do require great diligence and care in our prepari
them, and improving of them; much more do
munion-ſabbaths, which are ſolemn and high days,
in a ſpecial manner, days of the ſons of men; theſe
times wherein we make near approaches unto
and he makes moſt near approaches unto us; a
may be called days of heaven upon earth; for th
emin

minently repreſent the employments and enjoyments f the glorified ſaints in heaven; and, by the right improvement of them, we come to be prepared for living mongſt that bleſſed company. It is, then, our great luty and intereſt, carefully to make ready for theſe ſabbaths when they draw nigh, and to improve every hour nd minute of them with the greateſt diligence, when they actually do come.

The ſubject of the Lord's ſupper is pretty fully handled in my ſacramental catechiſm, both in a doctrinal and caſuiſtic manner. And, ſeeing it is needleſs to repeat what is there written, I muſt refer my reader to it, for a more full explication of ſeveral things relating to this ordinance than what is here to be expected; ſeeing I mainly deſign in this treatiſe to give practical directions for the right improvement of communion-ſabbaths. The ſubject is ſtill very large and copious, after all that hath been ſaid and written upon it; and there is room for much more. What I here intend may be comprehended under the three following heads:

I. Directions how to prepare for a communion-ſabbath before it come.

II. How to ſpend it when it is come.

III. How to behave ourſelves when it is over.

SACRAMENTAL DIRECTORY.

CHAP. I.

Containing Directions how to prepare for a Communion-Sabbath.

DIRECT. I Carefully endeavour and ſtudy to have a juſt and right uptaking of the nature, ends, and uſes of the Lord's ſupper; and the work of communicating while at the Lord's table.

THERE are many who have wrong notions of this ordinance, do greatly miſtake the ends and deſigns of it, and therefore cannot rightly partake of it: But, if we would be worthy communicants, we muſt ſeriouſly ponder and rightly underſtand the nature and ends of this ſolemn inſtitution of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ſo we may approach his table with diſtinct uptakings of our works and buſineſs there.

This ordinance was not inſtituted to turn bread and wine into the true body and blood of Chriſt, for people to worſhip it; nor to ſacrifice Chriſt again to the Father to be a propitiation for the ſins of the quick and the dead, as the Papiſts do abſurdly affirm. Neither was it appointed to make atonement for former ſins, to purchaſe a remiſſion, and inſure heaven to us *ex opere operato*, as ſome ignorant people do imagine. Nor was it deſigned to cloak ſome wicked practices, or maintain a good name among men, or any other worldly end, as hypocrites do pretend. But it is appointed by our great Lord and Saviour, as a *viſible repreſentation and commemoration of his death and ſufferings for his people, till he come again to judge the world.* And, in obedience to his command, all his people ought to come to his table, to celebrate this ordinance: And, while partaking of the outward ſymbols of bread and wine, they are believingly and thankfully

thankfully to remember Jeſus Chriſt, and his dying love; and alſo to receive and embrace him, as their bleeding high prieſt, into the arms of their faith, apply his benefits, reſt upon his merits, ſeal a covenant with him, look upon him whom they have pierced, with a mourning heart, and a ſolemn reſolve to pierce him no more.

This is a ſhort account of the nature of this ſacrament, and of the works of communicating. But, in order to give a more full and diſtinct view of this great, and ſolemn ordinance, we may conſider and take it up under theſe ſeveral reſpects following:

I. As a *peculiar ſign and diſtinguiſhing badge of the Chriſtian church from the infidel world, and a viſible token,* that we profeſs and own a crucified Jeſus for our Redeemer and Saviour, and that we depend only upon his death, and the merit of his blood, for the remiſſion of our ſins, and our reconciliation with God.

II. As a *lively repreſentation and memorial of Chriſt crucified, and the ineſtimable purchaſe of his death.* This ſacrament is a compendious map of the goſpel, and a viſible preaching of Jeſus Chriſt. The word preached holds him forth to the ear; but this ſacrament repreſents him to the eye, and, in a lively way, diſplays his redeeming love, his mighty acts, and unparalleled ſufferings for loſt ſinners. This ordinance is a laſting public monument to the world, of Chriſt's glorious victories and triumphs, as the captain of our ſalvation; of his vanquiſhing death and hell, his ſpoiling principalities and powers, and his obtaining peace for us. Likewiſe, we are to look upon it as a ſure pledge of Chriſt's ſecond coming, and a taſte of the new wine which believers will eternally drink with him in his Father's kingdom.

III. As a *ſpecial mean appointed by God for our ſpiritual advantage;* namely for the weakening of corruption, and the ſtrengthening of grace. The death of our glorious Redeemer, repreſented in this ordinance, gives ſuch a diſcovery of ſin to the believer as makes his ſoul to abhor it. And God bleſſeth it as a mean to excite and quicken the graces of repentance, faith, love, hope, joy and thankfulneſs, in believers; by giving them ſome-

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thing of a clearer view of the attributes of God, than they had before: As of his wiſdom in the contrivance of our redemption by Jeſus Chriſt, and his ſuretiſhip for us; of his mercy, love, and compaſſion, in ſparing poor, guilty, and hell-deſerving ſinners, ſuch as we are; of his juſtice and holineſs, in puniſhing ſin in ſuch a manner, yea, rather puniſhing it in his own ſon, than ſuffering it to go unpuniſhed; of his veracity and faithfulneſs, in accompliſhing the Old Teſtament types and prophecies, and confirming the covenant of grace, with the mercies therein promiſed, by the death of Jeſus Chriſt.

IV. As a *great feaſt, wherein Chriſt holds communion and fellowſhip with his people*, and richly entertains them. This ſacrament is the ſupper of the great God: The feaſt-maker is God the Father, the proviſion God the Son, whoſe fleſh is meat indeed, and whoſe blood is drink indeed: The gueſts are a company of poor unworthy ſinners, for whom the crumbs beneath the table are too good; yet to ſuch doth God give kindly welcome, ſaying, *Eat, O friends; drink*, &c. Cant. v. 1. A ſtrange feaſt! Chriſt is both the maker and matter of it, the feeder and the food, the giver and the gift! O what noble proviſion is Chriſt's fleſh and blood to the ſoul! John vi. 55. As bread and wine afford ſtrength, comfort, and nouriſhment to the body; ſo the fleſh and blood of Chriſt, received here by faith, do yield the ſame to the ſoul. How great is the variety of heavenly dainties preſented to us in this feaſt! viz. Pardon of ſin, reconciliation with God, adoption into his family, peace of conſcience, ſpiritual ſtrength, increaſe of grace, the precious promiſes of the covenant, the gracious preſence of Chriſt, the ſmiles of his countenance, the comfort, and quickening influences of his ſpirit. O what rare and delicious diſhes are theſe for a hungry ſoul! O for appetites for the full feaſt which Chriſt doth furniſh us in this wilderneſs!

V. We ought to view this ordinance as the *ſolemn ſealing and confirming of a covenant betwixt God and us.* This ſacrament is one of the ſeals of the covenant of grace which God makes with believers in Chriſt; and by

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of God's unmixed wrath eternally, if we deal falſly with God in his covenant." And thus we ſee how unworthy communicants and diſſemblers with God, do "eat and drink judgment to themſelves," with a witneſs.

VII. We ſhould take up this ſacrament, not only as a feaſt of love betwixt Chriſt and believers, but alſo as a bond of mutual love and unity among believers themſelves. As this feaſt of love is a remembrance of the greateſt love that ever was manifeſted, viz. of Chriſt's dying love to ſinners; ſo it is an excellent mean for procuring and advancing unity and love among the ſaints and ſervants of God. It is a mean, not only of uniting believers more firmly to Chriſt their head, but alſo of uniting and endearing the members of his myſtical body to one another.

Let us view the Lord's ſupper in the foreſaid ſeven reſpects, that we may ſee what a mighty ordinance it is, and have ſome diſtinct uptakings of its nature and ends, before we approach to it.

DIRECT. II. Be firmly perſuaded, that partaking of the Lord's ſupper is a moſt neceſſary duty; and the neglecting of it is a very great ſin.

THAT *communicating* is a neceſſary duty incumbent upon us, and not a matter of indifference which we may do, or not do, as we think fit, will appear from the following obligations which God hath laid upon us:

I. We have the command of our great Lord and lawgiver, to partake of this feaſt, oft repeated by the *Evangeliſts*: He ſaith to all his diſciples, *Take*; he ſaith to them, *Eat*; he ſaith to them, *Drink ye all of it*; he ſaith to them, *Do this in remembrance of me.* His precepts to pray, praiſe, hear, read, meditate, &c. are not more plain or expreſs, than his precepts to communicate. So that we are as much bound to give obedience to this, as to thoſe.

II. Gratitude ſtrongly obligeth us to obey this command, if we remember what he did for us, who gave it. O believer, did he not offer up himſelf, ſoul and body, as an atoning ſacrifice to ſatisfy divine juſtice for thy ſins?

ins? And, will not this engage you to obey him? Surely, every time you read or hear theſe words, *Do this in remembrance of me*, your heart ſhould melt and warm within you, when you conſider what he, who ſpoke them, hath done for you; even more than father, or mother, wife, brother, and all your relations could have done; yea, more than a million of Angels could have done for you. And, ſhall not his command have weight with you?

III. Remember the time when he gave you this charge. It was that night he was to begin his bitter and bloody agonies for you, and wade through a ſea of wrath and ſorrow upon your account. It was then when he beheld heaven, earth and hell, juſtice, men and devils, all conſpiring againſt him. Juſt at the time when he was going to offer up himſelf a ſacrifice in your ſtead, to ſave you from eternal flames, he gave you this charge, "Do this in remembrance of me;" as if he had ſaid, "Now I am juſt ready to be offered up, to die a curſed death for you, and with my blood to ſeal my teſtament, wherein I bequeath to you, pardon, peace, light, life, grace and glory; and now there is one requeſt I aſk of you, that, when I am dead, you keep up the remembrance of my love and ſufferings for you, by eating bread and drinking wine together with my people at my table; and there ſhew forth my death till I come again to judge the world." The words of dying men uſe to be of great weight with their ſurviving friends; and, will not the words of your dying ſurety, your dying elder brother, be of weight with you to obey his dying charge?

IV. Conſider how ſmall and eaſy the charge is he gives you: It is not to ſacrifice your firſt born, cut off a member of your body, give all you have to the poor, go in pilgrimage to the ends of the earth; it is not to go to the holy land, to viſit Chriſt's ſepulchre; or to the top of mount Calvary, where the croſs ſtood, "in remembrance of him." Theſe he required not, becauſe you might have judged them hard; and yet, as hard as they ſeem to be, had he demanded any of them, could

you have been anſwerable to diſobey ſuch an one as a dying Jeſus? How far leſs will you be able to anſwer at the great day for diſobeying him, when he requires no ſuch burdenſome taſk, but graciouſly injoins an action that is moſt eaſy, pleaſant and profitable to you; "Eat and drink at my table, in a thankful remembrance of what I have done for you?" and will you not pleaſe him in ſo ſmall a requeſt?

V. Chriſt gives you this charge, not for his good, but for your own. And your obedience to it contributes highly both to your pleaſure and your profit.

Firſt, O believer, is it not pleaſant to fet and keep a tryſt with your dear Saviour? Well, this ordinance is the ſolemn tryſting-place where he hath appointed to meet with you; it is there you may "ſee the King in his beauty;" there doth his glory ſhine. O how glorious is he in his "dyed garments and red apparel!"[2] With what deſire ſhould we go to ſee ſuch a beautiful ſight? How ſweet is it to hear his voice in this ordinance, which is the very muſic of heaven? How refreſhing for a doubting ſoul to hear him ſpeak as from the croſs, "It is finiſhed, the ranſom is paid, and juſtice is ſatisfied?" Can there be ſweeter melody, than to hear Chriſt whiſper into the ſoul's ear, "Fear not, I am thy ſalvation; The Lord hath put away thy ſin, thou ſhalt not die; Son, be of good cheer, all thy ſins are forgiven thee!"[3] How pleaſant muſt it be to eat and drink at Chriſt's feaſt, with ſuch heavenly muſic ſounding in our ears?

Secondly, Is not this action as profitable to us as pleaſant? Knoweſt thou, O man, what injury thou doſt to thy immortal ſoul by neglecting it? Canſt thou have any other but a lean, hungry, ſtarved ſoul, whilſt thou ſlighteſt the food God hath appointed for it? Doſt thou know what benefit ſome of thy neighbours have got at this feaſt? Some have come to it poor, and have gone away laden with riches: Some have come to it hungry, and have gone away ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs: Some have come thirſty, and have got floods poured out upon the dry ground: Some have come blind, and gone away ſeeing: Others lame, and have gone away walking. Here they have got all their diſeaſes cured, and their

their wants ſupplied. And, have you not as great need of theſe mercies as others? Come, then, to this enriching and ſoul-upmaking ordinance; take but a view of the benefits and bleſſings which Chriſt preſents to you, and which he faithfully offers to ſeal and apply to you in this ſacrament, even his own body and blood, and all the benefits and virtues of the ſame; ſurely Chriſt and all the benefits of his purchaſe is a vaſt portion: Behold, O believer, in this ordinance you have a ſeal and pledge, an earneſt and taſte of them all.

More particularly, 1*ſt*, you have here a ſealed remiſſion of ſin preſented to you, with the blood that was ſhed for the ſame, Matt. xxvi. 28.

2*dly*, A ſealed freedom from wrath and damnation: For a crucified Jeſus here repreſented endured that for you; and he promiſes that he who eats this food ſhall "never die eternally," John vi. 50. 51.

3*dly*, Adoption into God's family, and a right to the childrens privileges confirmed; for your being admitted to ſit at your father's table, and eat of the childrens bread, is a pledge of it.

4*thly*, The weakening of ſin, and ſubduing of corruption; for here you have food that kills ſin.

5*thly*, The increaſe of ſanctification, and ſtrengthening of grace: For here you have food that nouriſheth grace; and the ſanctifying Spirit is promiſed in that covenant, which is here ſealed, Ezek. xxxiv. 27.

6*thly*, Union and communion with Chriſt in the moſt intimate manner; for, ſaith he, John vi. 56. "He that eateth my fleſh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him." We dwell in him, by faith and love, and he in us by his Spirit.

7*thly*, A title to eternal life, John vi. 51. "If any man eat of this bread, he ſhall live for ever."

8*thly*, A ſealed promiſe of a glorious reſurrection, John vi. 54. "Whoſo eateth my fleſh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day."

9*thly*, A ſealed right to all the promiſes of the new covenant, which are great and precious, *viz.* That God will "put his laws in our inward parts, and write them

" in our hearts, Jer. xxxi. 33. That he will forgive our " iniquity, and remember our ſins no more, Jer. xxxi. " 34. That he will take away the ſtony heart, and " give us a heart of fleſh, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. That he " will put his fear in our hearts, and give us hearts to " fear him, Jer. xxxii. 39, 40. That he will cauſe us " to walk in his ſtatutes, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. That he will " not turn away from us to do us good, and that we " ſhall not depart from him, Jer. xxx. 40. That he will " ſend ſanctified rods and afflictions when they are " needful, Pſal. lxxxix 32. That he will put his ſpirit " within us, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. And thereupon we ſhall " have quickening, ſtrengthening, and ſin-mortifying " influences. And, laſtly, which comprehends all, that " he will be our God, and we ſhall be his people," Jer. xxxi. 33. Thus you ſee what a ſoul-profiting ordinance this is; to ſlight it then, muſt be a dreadful deſpiſing of your mercies, and a wronging of your own ſouls.

VI. Let me put you in mind with what gladneſs the Iſraelites of old did welcome the news of the celebration of their paſſover, in the room of which Chriſt hath inſtituted to us the Lord's ſupper. O what joy did it occaſion in Jeruſalem, when the trumpet was blown by the prieſt, to give intimation to the people of the day of the paſſover! How cheerful was the pſalmiſt's heart, when he ſaith, Pſal. lxxxi. 1.3. " Make a joyful noiſe unto the God of Jacob: Blow up the trumpet in the new-moon, in the time appointed, on our ſolemn feaſt-day!" This feaſt was ſtill obſerved upon the fifteenth day after the firſt appearance of the new-moon: And not having almanacks, as we have, to forewarn them of it, they uſed to ſend men to the top of the hill to watch for the appearance of the new-moon, who, aſſoon as they ſaw it, did run to tell the prieſt, that he might blow the trumpet, and give the welcome notice of it to the people, who received the news with univerſal joy. And have not we, Chriſtians, more cauſe to rejoice at the intimation of our goſpel-paſſover, in which we have Chriſt crucified, with all his benefits, far more evidently ſet forth before our eyes, than the people of the Jews had?

Alas? it is ſadly to be regretted, that in our age many people

:ople do oft hear the ſilver trumpet of the goſpel unding loud and long, calling them to the feaſt of the eat king, but are not ſuitably affected therewith. Were is great goſpel-ordinance, like the Jewiſh paſſover, to : celebrated but in one place in all the world; with hat zeal and deſire would people flock thither, to be- old it and partake of it? And, why ſhould we not me with the ſame affection and devotion now, when e have it celebrated in many places? Shall our hearts : evil, becauſe God is good? Shall we deſpiſe mercies hen they are given in plenty? Surely the frequent oc- ſions we have of this bleſſed feaſt, ſhould fill our hearts ith the greateſt thankfulneſs to the bountiful maker it, as they did the Chriſtians in the apoſtolic age.

But, beſides theſe arguments for the neceſſity of the ity of communicating, I ſhall, in the next place, ſhew e greatneſs of the ſin and danger of neglecting it.

I. You are hereby guilty of diſobedience to the com- and of the higheſt King and Sovereign in the world; y, of that King to whom you have ſworn allegiance baptiſm. Is Jeſus Chriſt your ſovereign, and will you ot obey his laws? Perhaps, if you neglected any other his commands, ſuch as to pray, give alms, or to hear e word, for one Lord's day, conſcience would ſmite u for it; and have you no check for diſobeying this mmand which he gave in the moſt ſolemn manner; y, a charge which our dying Teſtator gave us when s heart was full of ſorrow for us, and when he was ing to underly God's wrath in the garden, be bound a malefactor, and led away to the curſed tree for us? s the ſovereign Lord, who gave us this command, ith an undoubted right to our obedience, both by na- re and dear purchaſe; ſo, by the neglect of it, we are once guilty both of deſpiſing the authority of juſt wer, and the obligation of aſtoniſhing love.

II. What a ſin muſt it be to deſpiſe a ſacrament, which one of the moſt ſolemn ordinances of this great King? ou will readily acknowledge, that it is our indiſpenſi- e duty to receive the ſacrament of baptiſm, and that is a great ſin to neglect it. And why do you not own e ſame of the Lord's ſupper, ſeeing the ſame Lord,

who

who ſaid, Mat. xxviii. 19. "Go teach and baptize all "nations, ſaid alſo Luke xxii. 19. Do this in remem- "brance of me?" So that you have the ſame authority for both ſacraments. What abſurd inconſiſtency are ſome then guilty of, who think if their children die without baptiſm (though there be no ſinful neglect in the caſe) it endangers their ſalvation, but are not afraid themſelves to live and die without the Lord's ſupper, though their neglect be wilful and ſinful? Surely the practice of many, who overvalue one ſacrament, and undervalue another, is moſt unaccountable.

III. By declining to partake of the Lord's ſupper, you do upon the matter renounce your baptiſm (tho' the ſacrament you pretend to eſteem) ſeeing hereby you refuſe to be Chriſtians of free choice, and in effect ſay, you will not ſtand to theſe engagements your parents took on in your name, but will be at liberty to believe what you pleaſe, practiſe what you fancy, and ſerve the devil, the world, and the fleſh, as long as you think fit. You may profeſs the Chriſtian religion; but you are never Chriſtians by an act of your own, until you preſent yourſelves at the Lord's table, and there perſonally own your baptiſmal engagements, and openly avouch the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to be your Saviour, conſent to his religion, and dedicate yourſelves to his ſervice. Hearing of ſermons is not a ſufficient teſt of your doing ſo; for many do this from curioſity or cuſtom, more than any other principle; but the Lord's ſupper is the ordinance which Chriſt has inſtituted chiefly for the foreſaid ends. How great then muſt the ſin and danger of wilful neglecting it be? In effect, it is no leſs than an open denying of Chriſt before men; and ſuch, he ſays, "he will deny before his Father in heaven." I would have all, who bear the name of Chriſtians, to remember this; and, as they would not be reckoned among thoſe that renounce Chriſt and his religion, let them not contemn that ordinance, which is the appointed badge of the Chriſtian profeſſion.

IV. To neglect the Lord's ſupper is a moſt unthankful requital of the kindneſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in coming to free us from the burdenſome ſervice of the lega

legal ſervices, rites, and inſtitutions. If we did rightly conſider what we are bound to by the ſubjection we owe to a ſovereign Lord, and by the gratitude we owe to a kind benefactor; tho' he had injoined a great number of coſtly and laborious rites, and had laid upon us a yoke more heavy than that of the Jewiſh ceremonies, yet in juſtice we ſhould have thought all but a ſmall homage to his greatneſs, and a ſmall acknowledgement of his infinite love. But now, when in his mercy he hath freed us from the yoke of ceremonial bondage, and, beſide baptiſm, hath appointed but this one ſacred rite for us to obſerve, and one that is neither coſtly nor troubleſome, but moſt eaſy and pleaſant; what monſters of ingratitude ſhall we make ourſelves, if we ſlight this his gracious inſtitution?

V. By neglecting this divine ordinance, you put greater contempt upon the true and living God, than heathens do upon their dumb idols. How great is the reſpect that ſome brutiſh idolaters ſhow to idols, who cut their fleſh, ſhed their blood, ſacrifice their children, and ſtick at nothing, though never ſo hard or painful, to teſtify their homage and obſequiouſneſs to their ugly deities! And ſhall we, Chriſtians, profeſſed ſervants of the glorious Son of God, our ſovereign Lord and Redeemer, neglect his eaſy inſtitution, and refuſe to pleaſe him in ſo ſmall a thing! Surely the barbarous ſavages will riſe up in judgment with many profeſſed Chriſtians, and condemn them for their diſobedience. You, perhaps, on ſome occaſions, will profeſs to pity the blind heathens and brutiſh Indians, who are ſtrangers to Chriſtianity, and live and die in darkneſs; but, have not we as much reaſon to pity you, who diſown and pour contempt on that holy religion you were educated in, and thereby put yourſelves in a condition worſe than theirs? For, the Apoſtle tells us, that it is "better not to have known the way of truth, than, after we have known it, to turn away from the holy commandment," 2 Pet. ii. 21. And our Saviour ſaith, that it will be more tolerable for the dark cities of "Tyre and Sidon, at the day of judgment, than it will be for the enlightened Capernaum and Bethſaida," Matt. xi. 22. Your knowledge and profeſſion

of

of the truths of the Chriſtian religion do very much aggravate your diſobedience to the laws and inſtitutions thereof. You think their condition dreadful, that ſay there is no God, and no doubt it is ſo; but what better is your caſe? you acknowledge there is a God, but live as if you defied him, by open contemning and neglecting of his ordinances.

VI. By ſlighting this ordinance, you contemn the moſt advantageous offer that ever God made unto men. Here God the Father offereth to make over Chriſt to you, and all his purchaſe, and ſeal your right thereto. Particularly to give you his bleſſed Son, as your "wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 30. As your wiſdom, to enlighten you, and free you from ignorance; as your righteouſneſs, to juſtify you, and free you from the guilt of ſin; as your ſanctification, to make you holy, and free you from the reigning power and pollution of ſin; as your redemption, to reſtore you to the liberty of the ſons of God, bring you to the inheritance, and free you eternally from ſin and ſatan, hell and wrath. Now, O ſinner, if thou declineſt to come here and take Chriſt as thy wiſdom, how fooliſh and ignorant muſt thou ſtill remain? If thou refuſe Chriſt as thy righteouſneſs, how naked and guilty will thy ſoul be? If thou refuſe Chriſt as thy ſanctification, how vile and polluted muſt thou ſtill continue? If thou refuſe Chriſt as thy redemption, who will redeem thee from the wrath to come?

Conſider alſo the near and happy relations which Jeſus Chriſt himſelf offereth to ſtand in to thoſe who cordially receive him in this ordinance; ſuch as that of a maſter, a father, a captain, a ſhepherd, a bridegroom, and huſband. And, how great muſt our ſin and danger be, if we ſlight ſuch kind offers! If you refuſe Chriſt as a maſter now, will he not refuſe to own you as a ſervant in the great day? If you refuſe him as a captain, will he not reject you as one of his ſoldiers? If you refuſe him as a ſhepherd, will he not deny you as one of his ſheep? If you refuſe him as a bridegroom and huſband, will he not diſown you as his bride and ſpouſe? And, if Chriſt thus diſown you at the great day, how fearful will your condition be for ever?

VII.

VI Neglecting this feaſt of memorial is a thing moſt reaſonable in itſelf, as being againſt all the rules of manity and gratitude Surely it is moſt agreeable to ſon and equity, that all Chriſtians ſhould love their edeemer and benefactor, and keep up the memorial of s great adventures for ranſoming their ſouls. Is it not moſt reaſonable demand, and a very ſmall return he quires of you for all his love, only "eat and drink in membrance of me?" It is not, Go to a ſcaffold; but to a well covered table: It is not to bleed and burn, t to eat and drink: It is not to feed on the bread of liction, or water of adverſity, but bread that ſtrengths the heart, and wine that cheers the drooping ſpirit; licious fare, which your Saviour hath bleſſed and eetened for you. Now, muſt it not be againſt all reaſon to refuſe this agreeable demand, in order to preſerve the memory of the love of your *incomparable Benefactor*, and the ſufferings of your *dying Friend*, which patiently endured for you?

Ingrateful world! Can ye not endure to think on at which Chriſt refuſed not to endure for you? Did leave the glory of his Father, to be cloathed with ur nature, and to dwell in a fleſhly cottage? Did he e a life of ſorrows and ſufferings, and at laſt undergo hameful, painful, and curſed death? Did he riſe again, and aſcend on high to prepare manſions, and take ſeſſion of them for you? Doth he there abide to ant and plead your cauſe with God? And, do ye beve that he is ſhortly to come again to receive you to mſelf? And, will ye not for a ſhort while here keep the remembrance of his love? O, did Chriſt drink negar on the croſs for you, yea, vinegar made bitter, t, and poiſonable, with your ſins? And will ye not ink wine at his table, that is ſweetened and made deious with the choice bleſſings of his love, and conſoions of his Spirit? Did he drink a cup of wrath for u, and will ye not drink a cup of bleſſing for him, y, for yourſelves? For, the advantage is only yours. O Chriſtians, had we the due impreſſions of the amaz- goodneſs and incomparable love of our matchleſs deemer, the remembrance whereof he enjoins us to

keep up in this ordinance; we would ſay, Lord, what is ſufficient to be done in memory of this love? Every one of our hearts would echo back at Chriſt's call, "Do this in remembrance of me." *Do this!* Lord, what is it that I would not do for thy ſake? Glorious Jeſus, didſt thou paſs by the angels, and wouldſt have no nature but mine? I'll then ſtop mine ears againſt the ſolicitations of the world, and have no will but thine. *Remember thee!* Whom ſhall I remember if I forget thee? "If I forget thee, O my Saviour, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: If I remember not thee, let my right hand forget her cunning." Lord, I cannot but bluſh when I think that I ſhould need any *memento* or token to keep up the remembrance of thee: Ah! ſhall the trifles of the world find room enough in my heart and memory, and my Redeemer's love have ſcarce any place there? Lord, hadſt thou required the deareſt of my blood and choiceſt of my ſubſtance to be offered thee in acknowledgment of it, yea, hadſt thou demanded my life, I owe it to thee, nay, a thouſand lives, if I had them: And, ſhall I not cheerfully give thee up my memory and thoughts when thou art pleaſed to aſk them?

O then, if there be any obligations in the higheſt authority, any allurements in the ſweeteſt love, any reality in your profeſſed ſubjection to Jeſus Chriſt, give him this proof of it, cheerfully obey his dying charge, meet with his people, and remember his love at his feaſt of memorial, and join hymns of praiſe therewith. O pleaſe him in this ſo eaſy and ſo ſmall a requeſt.

VIII. Finally, I would have you to remember how provoking the neglect of this ordinance is to him that inſtituted it. You are guilty of deſpiſing the greateſt preparation which the King of kings makes for his ſubjects; for in this ordinance he doth, as it were, kill the fatted calf, and furniſh his table with the choiceſt rarities of heaven, and ſend forth his ſervants to invite us, ſaying, "I have prepared my ſupper, come eat of my bread, and drink of my wine which I have mingled; all things are ready, come to the marriage" So great and coſtly is this feaſt, that it coſt the maker of it his own life to prepare it. "Pardon of ſin, peace with God,

God, and communion with him," which are the dainies here ſet before you, coſt Jeſus Chriſt no leſs than his life to purchaſe them for you. And, do you think his glorious King can take it well at your hands, if you make light of this rare and coſtly feaſt, and ſlight all the preparation he hath made for you? Can you ever expect to enjoy communion with him in heaven, if you ſlight the offer of communion with him upon earth? Nay, you provoke him to cut you off eternally from his preſence: For, as of old, the Lord threatened cutting off the ſoul of him that neglected to keep the paſſover, becauſe he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed ſeaſon, Num. ix. 13. ſo he threatens the ſame to thoſe who ſhould ſlight the goſpel-feaſts typified thereby, Zech. xiv. 16. 17. 18. Luke xiv. 24. We ſee how his wrath was kindled againſt thoſe that neglected to come to the marriage of the king's ſon, and how ſeverely he puniſhed them for it, Matt. xxii. 5. 7. "They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandiſe." But, when the king heard thereof he was wroth, and "he ſent forth armies and deſtroyed theſe murderers, and burnt up their city." He reckons your *eating not*, no leſs ſin than *eating irreverently*; for, as by this you are guilty of profaning the Lord's body, ſo by the other you are guilty of deſpiſing it, and preferring your luſts before him, which is a crime as heinous.

Objections Anſwered.

HERE it may be proper to anſwer ſome objections which are made againſt partaking of the Lord's ſupper; whether by the prophane, ſlothful, or ſcrupulous.

Object. I. Some profane perſons think meanly of this ordinance, and hence they neglect it, What needs ſo much noiſe (think they) about this matter? It is but eating a little bread, and drinking a ſmall portion of wine; what efficacy can there be in that action?

Anſ. This ordinance is of divine authority, and not appointed by men like ourſelves. It hath the ſtamp of

our Lord's inſtitution, which ſhould make it to be highly valued by all Chriſtians: For, as he hath wiſely inſtituted it for moſt important ends and uſes, ſo he will certainly make it effectual unto theſe ends. A little parchment, with ink and wax upon it, is in itſelf a ſmall thing; yet, being of legal authority and inſtitution among men, it ſerveth to convey a right and title to a great inheritance, and ſo it becometh highly valuable. The brazen ſerpent, that was lift upon a pole for healing the Iſraelites, was mean to the outward view; but, being of God's appointment, it was effectual for healing, and therefore none would deſpiſe it. So the elements in this ſacrament, however common or mean in themſelves, yet being of God's appointment, and conſecrated for ſacred uſes, they are powerful and efficacious to the believing receiver, for the great ends of their inſtitution.

Object. II. We may remember Chriſt in the word; and what need is there for doing it in the ſacrament?

Anſ. 1*ſt*, It is abominable preſumption to think ourſelves wiſer than Jeſus Chriſt, who is the *Wiſdom of the Father*. Hath he thought this ordinance needful; and will any man judge it needleſs?

2*dly*, The word only preſents Chriſt unto the ear, but the Lord's ſupper ſets forth a crucified Chriſt unto the eye.

3*dly*, There is more than a ſimple remembering of Chriſt required in the Lord's ſupper; there is alſo a renewing of baptiſmal engagements, and a ratifying our covenant with God. And beſides, our Lord hath reſerved ſome ſpecial bleſſings and communications to this ordinance, which are nowiſe to be undervalued or ſlighted.

Object. III. It is hard to be at ſo much pains, and to employ ſo much time in meditation, examination, prayer, &c. as is requiſite to prepare for communicating.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, There are many who do not grudge to be at much pains and travel, and frequently to hazard their lives, both by ſea and land, for a little temporal gain; and, will you grudge ſome pains to prepare for this ordinance,

dinance, which ſeals a right to the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, and by means whereof you might, thro' the divine bleſſing, be enabled to ſubdue your ſins, reform your lives, grow in grace, and be made ready for death and judgment? Is not this ſpiritual gain better than the gain of a whole world?

2*dly*, Are there not many who throw away their hours in needleſs pleaſures and paſtimes? And, with what face can ſuch pretend they have not time to examine themſelves, and prepare for this bleſſed ordinance? What are theſe tranſient pleaſures of time you are ſo fond of, to the comfortable views of an intereſt in Chriſt, and of living with him throughout eternity, which may be got at his table?

3*dly*, Will you be at no pains to pleaſe that King and Sovereign, to whom you have ſworn allegiance, or to obey the command and dying charge of your great Maſter and Saviour? That vile impoſtor, Mahomet, forbade his diſciples to drink wine; and this command hath been religiouſly obſerved among them: And, ſhall our renowned Saviour, who is Lord of angels, and ſon of the moſt high God, injoin us the uſe of the wine in the ſacrament; and, will any of his diſciples adventure to diſobey him? "Tell it not in Gath, publiſh it not in the ſtreets of Aſkelon." Let not this be told among Turks, Jews, Infidels, Atheiſts, and the reſt of the adverſaries of the Chriſtian religion, leſt they ſhould inſult and triumph.

4*thly*, Our Lord Jeſus had a thouſand more difficulties and diſcouragements in the work of our redemption, and yet he did not ſhrink back, as you do from communicating. He never objected, "The ſea is deep, I cannot wade it; the croſs is heavy, I cannot bear it; the cup is bitter, I cannot drink it; the wrath is terrible, I cannot endure it." He did not plead, tho' he had cauſe, "The work is hard, it will coſt me dear; and I ſhall meet with an unthankful world, that will ſlight my love, refuſe my offers, and deſpiſe my inſtitutions." No; he overlooked all that, and went cheerfully thro' his ſufferings: "With deſire have I deſired (ſaith he) to eat this paſſover, the cup that the Father hath given me, ſhall I not drink it?" When the Father called

him

him to drink the very dregs of the cup of trembling for you, he readily anſwered, "Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will." But when he calls you to take the cup of ſalvation, and call upon the name of the Lord; what grudging and backdrawing is there with you! Had Chriſt ſo great deſire after the bitter cup of God's wrath on your account; and have you no deſire after the cup of bleſſing in the ſacrament? Did he go ſo cheerfully to die for you; and, are you unwilling to go and feaſt with him? Be aſtoniſhed, O heavens, at this ingratitude!

How wretched and perverſe a creature is man! Still he would be flying in the face of God's authority: For, when God ſaid to him, "Eat not of this forbidden fruit;" then he will needs eat, tho' it ruin him. But when God ſaith, "Eat of this bread;" he is backward to do it, tho' it be for his eternal welfare. O how long doth a patient and merciful God bear with us!

Object. IV. I am ſo ſtated with my worldly buſineſs, that I cannot get time to prepare myſelf in ſecret, and give ſuch attendance in public as is needful, and ſo I cannot come.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, Doth not your buſineſs afford you time to eat, drink and ſleep, and converſe with unprofitable company; and, can you find no time to converſe with God in his ordinances, or to prepare for meeting and dwelling with God throughout eternity?

2*dly*, Can you have any greater, any better buſineſs in the world, than to remember the love of a dying Saviour, to put your ſouls in order to meet with him at his table, and there to ſeal a covenant with him, and receive pledges from him of his pardoning and redeeming love? Is there any buſineſs upon earth ſo preferable to this?

3*dly*, When ſickneſs and death come, you muſt find time to attend them whether you will or not; all your buſineſs muſt of neceſſity give place to them. And, muſt you find time to be ſick and die, how ſoon the ſummons cometh; and will you not find time in your health to prepare for ſickneſs and death before they come? Now, if you would take time duly to prepare for the Lord's ſupper, you ſhould not be found unprepared for death; for the ſame preparation is needful for both.

Object.

Object. V. But, ſay ſome, we are not fit for the Lord's table, (and perhaps it is very true:) Why? We have but looſe lives and converſations; there is ſome bad company we cannot be free of, ſome ſins we cannot get left; and ſo we cannot come to the Lord's table.

Anſ. 1*ſt* God will ſurely look upon it as no other than a mocking of him, to ſay, you are not dreſſed for this feaſt, when indeed you never went about to make yourſelves ready. Nay, he will look upon it as the moſt heinous wickedneſs, for you to go on wilfully in your ſins and wicked courſes, and then to make your ſins an excuſe for the neglect of thoſe duties he commands you.

2*dly*, If you ſay, you are not fit for the Lord's ſupper here; you muſt confeſs you are leſs fit for the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb above. And, how can you live one day contendedly in that condition you dare not venture to die in; or, if you die in it, you muſt be eternally excluded from heaven? Conſider then, O profane ſinner, although you may now ſit Chriſt's charming call to come to his table and remember him, you cannot ſit his alarming call to come to his tribunal to anſwer before him. And, how can you think to look upon that face with comfort at that day, which now you have no pleaſure to behold in the ſymbols of bread and wine?

3*dly*, Let me aſk thee, O profane man, do you intend to repent and leave your ſins; or do you not? If you do not intend it, then it is in vain to treat with you, ſeeing you wilfully make choice of everlaſting burnings But there are few ſo graceleſs and wicked, but will ſay they have intentions to do it. Well, if your intentions be hearty and ſincere, ſurely you will put them ſpeedily in execution: And, if you do this, your objection evaniſheth; your bad life can no longer hinder you from this ordinance, ſeeing all penitent reforming ſinners are welcome to Chriſt, and to his table alſo, whatever their former lives have been.

Object. VI. But (ſaith one) I am not in charity with my neighbours; I am at variance with ſuch a perſon that hath injured me; and ſo I cannot come to the Lord's table.

Anſ.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, I do acknowledge, the want of love to our neighbours, and the entertaining of angry ſtrife and diſcord with them, do very much diſcompoſe and unfit us for approaching to this feaſt of love; and therefore we ſhould uſe all endeavours to remove theſe impediments before hand.

2*dly*, Suppoſe thy neighbour hath done thee wrong, and given you juſt ground of diſpleaſure with him; yet you ought to uſe endeavours to get the difference removed, by ſeeking to convince him of his fault, and ſhewing your readineſs to forgive him, and be reconciled with him.

3*dly*, Suppoſe thy neighbour, after all Chriſtian methods taken with him, perſiſts in his injuries without repentance or reparation; it is no uncharitableneſs to be diſpleaſed with him, if thy anger keep within juſt bounds, and thou doſt not hate his perſon, or ſtudy revenge againſt him. The Apoſtle ſaith, Eph. iv. 26. "Be angry, and ſin not," whence we ſee, that anger may be ſeparated from ſin. Now, what is not ſin, doth not make us unfit for this holy ordinance. A man may be innocently angry, when he is juſtly diſpleaſed with another, both for offending God and himſelf; but in the mean time, is ſo far from deſiring revenge, or ſeeking his hurt, that he pities and prays for the injurious perſon, and is ready to render good for evil. Now, when this is the caſe, as our anger or diſpleaſure doth not indiſpoſe us for the ſacrament, ſo neither ſhould our neighbour's unchriſtian behaviour and backwardneſs to reconciliation, deter us from our duty, or tempt us to deprive ourſelves of the benefit of this ordinance.

4*thly*, But if you be of the number of thoſe who keep up quarrels with your neighbours, are of unforgiving and revengeful ſpirits; you are altogether unfit for this ordinance, and ſhould tremble to approach it in ſuch a condition; ſeeing in effect you renounce Chriſt as a Saviour, reject his example, and deſpiſe his precepts. You cannot pray as he directs, "forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us; for this were no other than a fearful imprecation of wrath againſt yourſelves. Would you then have forgiveneſs of the injuries

ies you have done to God? would you have this bleſ-
g ſealed to you in the ſacrament, and openly declared
the great day? then be ready to forgive thoſe that
ong you, lay aſide quarrels, abhor revenge, let not
ſun go down upon your wrath, ſeek peace and
ndſhip with all. Remember, that thoſe who har-
r wrath and malice in their hearts, are as unfit to
ear at God's tribunal as at his table.

Object. VII. "Though we be not in caſe for this, yet
reſolve to prepare and go to the next communion."
Anſ. 1*ſt*, All delays in well-doing are highly dange-
s, and particularly in the preſent caſe. For, 1*ſt*,
ur lives are wholly uncertain, you may not live to
another communion. Many were alive at the laſt
mmunion, that are now dead, and fixed in their ever-
ing lot; and many now living will, in all likelihood,
in the ſame ſtate before the next communion; and
I know not but you may be among them. And, if
conſider what ſtinging reflections the ſlighters of
riſt and his inſtitutions will have through eternity;
refore neglect not the preſent opportunity.
dly, Though God ſhould ſpare you to ſee another
aſion of this ſort, what ground have you to think
I ſhall be more willing or fit to communicate, then,
n at preſent? Do you not know that by delays the
rt is ſtill the more hardened, and the habits of ſin
more ſtrengthened? And, if you refuſe to hearken
God's call now, he may refuſe to hear your cry af-
ward, Zech. vii. 13.

Object. VIII. "But, ſay ſome ſcrupulous and doubting
ls, this is an awful and tremendous ordinance: and
s not ſafe for ſuch poor, unworthy, and unprepared
atures as we are, to meddle with it."
Anſ. 1*ſt*, It is very ordinary for people to run into
remes about this ordinance. Either they entertain
low an opinion, or elſe they have too frightful
ughts of it: And both theſe are to be equally guard-
againſt. Remember, that the ſacrament was not in-
ated to terrify believers, but to bring them into con-

verſe and familiarity with their Lord and Saviour, and to give them the tokens and intimations of his love And why ſhould a feaſt of love be terrible to us?

2*dly*, Every man, in a legal ſenſe, is unworthy to approach to this holy table: We are all as an unclean thing, and our righteouſneſs is as filthy rags before God. But he is graciouſly pleaſed to accept of them who abhor themſelves for their pollution, and ſeek ſhelter under the covert of Chriſt's righteouſneſs.

3*dly*, How long will ye make uſe of this excuſe of unfitneſs and unpreparedneſs? Do ye intend to do it all your days? Or, will it be of any uſe to you when you are called to die? When God commands you to die, will you have confidence to ſay, Lord, I cannot obey at this time, for I am not prepared? No, no; it would be in vain then to hang back, ſeeing death will not ſpare when it gets commiſſion, whether prepared, or unprepared. Would you not, therefore, in ſuch a caſe, ſet about immediate preparation, and do what you are able to get yourſelves prepared for death? So do in this caſe: When Chriſt commands you to come to his table, though matters be ſadly out of order with you, yet ſet about the work in obedience to his command, prepare what ye are able, and look to him for ſtrength, who pities the weak, and accepts of ſincere mints at duty.

Object. IX. "But (ſome may inſiſt to ſay) we are unworthy; for we have not only many defects in our lives, but alſo many inward diſtempers, heart-plagues, hardneſs, deadneſs, darkneſs, prevailing corruptions," &c.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, No wonder you complain of many diſtempers, when you refuſe the means of healing. May not God look upon it as diſſimulation, to complain of the hardneſs of your heart, while you come not to apply the blood of Chriſt to ſoften it; or of the prevailing of your corruptions, while you come not to Chriſt's croſs to ſubdue them. No wonder that God withdraw from your ſouls, when you withdraw from your duty. No wonder you are ſtrangers to ſpiritual joy, when you will not come to draw water out of the wells of ſalvation. No wonder you complain of the weakneſs of grace, when you

rou will not make uſe of the means for ſtrengthening t. Many have found at this ordinance a cure for all heir diſeaſes, a ſupply to all their wants, and an anſwer o all their complaints.

2dly, Study to do your part by ſerious preparation, nd you may expect God will not fail to do his part: ſpread out your ſores and diſeaſes before the great Phyician, and look unto him for healing; preſs through all loubts and diſcouragements towards him, believing you hall be healed, if you can but touch the hem of his garnent. If you ſincerely, heartily, and impartially, repent f all known ſins, and rely on Jeſus Chriſt for mercy nd pardon, you have no reaſon to queſtion but you hall be welcome gueſts at the Lord's table, although you ind in your hearts many infirmities and plagues, and n your lives many defects and ſhort-comings.

Object. X. "But (ſay ſome) that word *damnation* frights s, 1 Cor. xi. 29. It is terrible to eat and drink damnaion to ourſelves, as unworthy communicants do."

Anſ. It is very true, unworthy communicants are liable to damnation; but ſo alſo are all other ſinners: Whoſoever hears the word unworthily, or prays unworhily, incurs the peril of damnation, as well as he that ommunicates unworthily; and yet you do not think you ought to deſiſt from hearing or praying on that account, and why only from communicating? Every ſin, ndeed, is damning in its own nature, and ſo is unworhy receiving in a ſpecial manner: But ſincere repentng and believing in Chriſt is an expedient againſt this s well as other ſins; for "the blood of Chriſt cleanſeth us from all ſins."

Object. XI. "We are afraid (ſay ſome) to come and nter into covenant with God, and take on vows at the Lord's table, leſt we do not keep them, but fall again nto new ſins, and ſo increaſe our guilt."

Anſ. 1*ſt*, If it were left, as a matter of indifference, o come to or abſent yourſelves from the Lord's table, as you pleaſed, your objection might be pertinent; but remember, this is a duty injoined under the high-

eſt

eſt pains. You ſee what fearful deſtruction came upon them that refuſed to come to the marriage-ſupper, Matt. xxii. 7.

2*dly*, It is good always to be jealous of ourſelves; for we have good reaſon for it, conſidering the deceitfulneſs of our hearts. But this ſhould not keep us from the ordinance, or make us to neglect our duty.

3*dly*, Breach of vows, or ſins committed after a ſacrament, though they be of greater guilt than other ſins, yet we are not to judge them unpardonable; for, who is it that liveth and ſinneth not? Such a notion perhaps hath poſſeſſed the ignorant Muſcovites, who endeavour to fall aſleep as ſoon as they have received the ſacrament, to prevent, by that means, any occaſion of ſin.

4*thly*, There is ground to ſuſpect, that this excuſe or pretence is not real with many; but rather, that they are unwilling to come under new bonds and engagements to a holy life. They entertain ſome affection to their old ſins, and are not willing to renounce them altogether, and prepare ſincerely for this holy ordinance.

5*thly*, If you be ſo much afraid of ſin, and of ſinning after the ſacrament; why are you not afraid of this ſin of neglecting the ſacrament, which I ſhewed before to be very heinous? Now, why do you live in this ſin ſo quietly! Surely, if you were afraid of all ſin, you would be afraid of this heinous ſin too; and ſo would make conſcience of preparing yourſelves for the Lord's table, that you might be preſerved from the guilt of ſlighting this ſolemn ordinance.

Laſtly, Conſider you are not to vow and engage here in your own ſtrength, but in the ſtrength of the Lord Jeſus; you are to truſt and rely upon him, "who performeth all things for us," Pſal. lviii. 2. for he is become ſurety for our duty, as well as for our debt. Now, whatever be our own weakneſs, we ſhould not ſcruple to engage with ſuch an able ſurety.

DIRECT. III. Believe and be perſuaded, that communicating is not only a duty, but that it is a duty incumbent upon you to communicate frequently.

BAPTISM being a ſacrament appointed for the initiation and implantation of believers into the church, it is to be received but once by the ſame perſon, and not to be reiterated: But the Lord's ſupper being a ſacrament inſtituted for the nutrition, increment, and growth of believers, it is often to be received and repeated by them. And this may be confirmed by many reaſons:

I. "Frequent partaking of the Lord's ſupper is injoined by the ſame authority which inſtituted it." For Chriſt tells us, that we are not only to eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, but we are to do it *often;* as is recited by the apoſtle, 1 Cor. xi. 25. "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." And again, ver. 26. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's death till he come." Now, when our Lord doth expreſsly command the duty in theſe words, *Do this in remembrance of me;* and doth twice over annex the word OFTEN, as neceſſary in the doing of it; it is all one as if he had ſaid, *Do this often in remembrance of me.* So that for Chriſtians to communicate ſeldom, is diſobedience to Chriſt, and a contempt of Divine authority: For our Redeemer is God, and we are to look upon his commands as the ſame with the commands of God the Father, ſeeing he approved of our Mediator, and of every thing he did. Had not his inſtitutions been agreeable to his Father's will, he had not been ſo welcomed at his return to heaven, and advanced to ſuch royal dignity to ſit upon his throne of glory.

II. "In obedience to Chriſt's authority, the apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians, did frequently partake of the Lord's ſupper;" yea, it was their ordinary practice every Lord's day, as is evident from Acts xx. 7. "And, upon the firſt day of the week, when the diſciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them." The Chriſtians there, are brought in as meeting together for

partaking

partaking of the ſacrament, (which is oft expreſſed by breaking of bread) without any previous warning, becauſe it was their ordinary cuſtom ſo to do. And this practice was kept up in the church for ſeveral centuries after the apoſtles death, as is teſtified by the hiſtorians and fathers of the ancient church. And, from their practice of conſtant breaking of bread every Lord's day, the day was anciently called *Dies panis, Auguſt. Epiſt.* 118. And this primitive practice (according to ſome) was grounded upon the word, Ezek. xliii. 29. "And when theſe days are expired, it ſhall be on the eighth day, and ſo forward, the prieſts ſhall make your burnt-offerings upon the altar, and your peace-offerings, and I will accept you, ſaith the Lord God." Now, this viſion containing a prophetical deſcription of the goſpel times, and of the ceaſing of the ceremonial law for daily-ſacrifices, by the eighth day they underſtand the Lord's day, as being the eighth day following upon the ſeventh, viz. the Jewiſh ſabbath, in room whereof it was to ſucceed. By burnt-offering, the Lord's ſupper, as being the remembrance of the great burnt-offering, whereby our peace was made. By burnt-offerings, prayer, and thankſgiving, which are called ſacrifices, Hebrews xiii. 15. and are the proper work of every Lord's day. The primitive Chriſtians were peculiarly fond of the Lord's ſupper; when they had the opportunity of a public aſſembly, though upon a week day, (as ſeverals do obſerve from Acts ii. 46.) they could not think of parting till they had celebrated the memorials of Chriſt's dying love. They reckoned this piece of worſhip a principal part of the Chriſtian religion, which, in a manner, doth comprehend all other parts of it, and is an epitome of the whole. They accounted it a chief means of conveying to them the benefits of their Redeemer's death. And they would not ſlight the occaſion of taking this proviſion and *viaticum* in theſe ſtormy times, when they knew not but they might be ſnatched away by the fury of perſecutors before the next day of public meeting.

III. "The Lord's ſupper was appointed for the commemoration of the death and ſufferings of Chriſt, and of his love to us manifeſted therein;" and therefore we ought

ought frequently to celebrate it for that end. Though gratitude to a merciful God, and love to him that loved us, and washed us in his blood, should engage us constantly to remember redeeming love: yet, alas! we are naturally unmindful of God, ungrateful to Christ our Saviour, and apt to forget his matchless love: And therefore we frequently need this help (which he of purpose hath instituted) to renew our remembrance of him. Say not, you can remember Christ frequently without this; for this were to make yourselves wiser than the instituter of this ordinance. Besides, may not experience tell you what faint thoughts and languid remembrance you ordinarily have of him, notwithstanding of the word read and preached, until this solemn ordinance doth return and revive the memory of his love, and fix your thoughts more solemnly upon him. Ah! the body of death doth hinder us from remembering the Lord of life. It is not sufficient to commemorate his love once a-year; there ought to be a constant and habitual remembering of our Redeemer's death, and this habit must be acquired by frequent and reiterated acts of communicating. But supposing we would remember him without this; yet surely it would be base ingratitude to neglect to remember him in his own method, and by the means of his own chusing, when he might have put far harder conditions upon us.

IV. "Christ hath appointed this sacrament as a spiritual meal for the nourishment and strength of his people, and for the growth and increase of their graces:" And therefore it ought to be frequently received. Meals for the nourishment of our bodies must be often repeated, because of the frequent recurring of our needs; we are all so sensible of it, that we do not refuse to come frequently to our stated meals: And though it be not told us how often we should eat and drink, yet our craving appetites, and the sense of our want of food and strength, are sufficient to direct in this matter. And, should not the sense of our souls need of spiritual food and strength direct us to frequency in communicating? We are in a journey, and we need strength to go forward. We are weak of ourselves, and the best are liable to frequent decays

decays of grace, and we have all need of frequent ſupplies of ſtrength, to enable us to perform duties, bear croſſes, reſiſt enemies, and beat down luſts: And, conſequently, we have frequent need of this quickening, reſtoring, and ſtrengthening meal, which Chriſt hath graciouſly provided for us in this ordinance. It is hereby that faith is ſtrengthened, repentance renewed, love inflamed, deſire ſharpened, and the ſoul encouraged and confirmed in the ways of God.

V. "This ordinance was inſtituted for bringing us to near *communion* with God;" and therefore ſhould be frequently celebrated and attended by us. Hence it is that we call it the *communion*, according to that word, 1. Cor. x. 16. And, as the Apoſtle tells us there, ver. 19. 20. that the partaking of things ſacrificed to idols, was a fellowſhip with devils; ſo, here the partaking of that which was ſacrificed to God, is a fellowſhip with God. In this ordinance there is more communion to be had with God, than in any other; more than in prayer or praiſe: For we have not ſo near communion with a prince or great man, by petitioning him, or returning him thanks for a favour received, as we have by ſitting with him at his table, and partaking of the ſame bread, and the ſame cup with him. It is here that believers ſit, feaſt, and converſe familiarly with Jeſus Chriſt. Chriſt was "made known to the diſciples in the breaking of bread," though they knew him not before in the opening of the ſcriptures, Luke xxiv. 30. 31. Now, if it be our duty to ſeek frequent communion and converſe with God, and frequent views and diſcoveries of Jeſus Chriſt, then, ſurely, it is our duty to make frequent approaches to the Lord's table. Do we think that we can too oft behold a crucified Jeſus? Can we too oft claſp about our bleeding high Prieſt? Can we too oft hear the muſic of his voice, or ſee the beauty of his face? Surely, if we love him, we will deſire frequently to be in thoſe ways where we may meet with him.

VI. "This ſacrament is an excellent mean for the weakening of ſin, and keeping it under;" and therefore we ſhould frequently attend it. The ſoul is moſt animated and reſolved againſt ſin, when it ſees God's wrath

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indignation manifeſted againſt it: Now, where can behold this ſo well as in this ordinance, which repre-s the dreadful agonies and ſufferings of Chriſt our ty? Here we may ſee Chriſt ſacrificed to juſtice, o-whelmed with blood, made a curſe, and bearing all : wrath and vengeance which the law threatened for

The ſouls looking upon Chriſt here, doth open the ng of ſorrow for ſin, Zech. xii. 10 Our frequent roaches to a wounded Saviour here, do kindle fre-nt reſolutions againſt ſin that pierced him, and make ook and cry to him for grace to ſubdue it. Now, this hat we are conſtantly needing: For there is ſtill a : of bitterneſs in us, always ſprouting up; but fre-nt approaches to this ordinance do contribute to curb crop it. Sins and luſts of themſelves are apt to re- and gather ſtrength, but the ſacramental cup is on to them. Do you think, then, that we can too take this cup into our hands, or put our hands into iſt's wounds, or take a view of the ſin-killing blood?

II. "This ordinance is a choice mean for ſtrength-ig our faith in the promiſes, and confirming us in ſenſe of Chriſt's love;" and therefore it ſhould be fre-ntly celebrated It was upon this account, that ſo it joy and gladneſs did attend the keeping of the paſ-r of old, 2 Chron. xxx. 21 26. It was the frequent iking of bread, that made the primitive Chriſtians to tinue in their gladneſs of heart, Acts ii 46. And no ider a man's heart be glad, and be encouraged to on his way rejoicing, when he gets a new ſeal of his don and peace with God. We frequently contract lt, and thereby blot our evidences, and diſturb our ce; and therefore we need to come frequently to this inance, to get the blood of ſprinkling applied, for re-ving our guilt, clearing our evidencies, ſealing our ce, and renewing our joy. It is matter of joy to ſee rainbow appearing frequently in the clouds as a ſign God's minding his covenant, and ſecuring the world inſt a deſtroying deluge: In like manner, it ſhould re-ce the heart, and ſtrengthen faith, frequently to be-ld this ſacrament, which (like the rainbow in the

clouds) is a ſign of God's ſecuring the believing world againſt the overflowing flood of God's wrath.

VIII. "We need frequently the influences of the holy Spirit," and therefore ſhould come frequently to this ordinance For, in this ſacrament it is moſt likely that the Spirit will work and exert himſelf; when the office of the Spirit, and end of the inſtitutions, do meet and agree in one. The office of the Spirit is to bring things to our remembrance, and the chief deſigns of this ordinance is to bring a crucified Jeſus, and his love and ſufferings, to remembrance; now, ſurely it is the moſt likely time for the holy Spirit to come and exerciſe his bleſſed function, and join in with the end of the ſacrament. Hither, then, ſhould becalmed ſouls frequently repair, and wait for the Spirit's gales.

I might add many other arguments, but ſurely, if we had a due ſenſe of our ſouls neceſſities, we ſhould need no more to convince us of the neceſſity of frequent communicating. Do not we feel our needs frequently recurring, our graces languiſhing, faith weakening, love cooling, affections turning dead? Are we not apt frequently to grow cold and formal in hearing and praying, yea, dull and lukewarm in all our performances? And, have we not frequent need of this reviving and enlivening ordinance, to recruit us with new ſtrength and quickening? But, alas! we have little ſenſe of our ſouls wants, and litle ſenſe of our Saviour's love; otherwiſe we would not be ſo unwilling frequently to remember ſuch an incomparable Friend and Benefactor who took our ſins upon himſelf, and caſt upon us the robe of his righteouſneſs Did primitive Chriſtians think once a week little enough to commemorate his love; and ſhall modern Chriſtians reckon once a-year ſufficient? Is this our kindneſs to the always lovely and loving Jeſus? O will we not remember him frequently, who remembers believers perpetually?

Objections anſwered.

Object. I. "But (ſay ſome) the zeal and devotion of the apoſtolic age is now gone; and Chriſtians are become

come more careleſs and formal in religious duties, than in thoſe days, and ſo are unfit for frequent partaking of this ſolemn ordinance.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, I grant, indeed, the firſt Chriſtians were animated with more life and love, and were habitually in a better frame for this love-feaſt, than, alas! the moſt of us are: Yet, I am perſuaded, you will not deny but we are under the ſame obligations of love and gratitude to our dying Redeemer that they were, and have as much need of the frequent application of his blood, and of a confirmed intereſt in his meritorious death, as they had. And, ſeeing our obligations and exigencies are the ſame, our differing ſo widely from their practice cannot be juſtified.

2*dly*, The ancient church did follow the example of the Apoſtolic age, in communicating generally every Lord's day, for ſeveral hundreds of years after the Apoſtles days; as might be made appear, by many quotations (if it were needful) out of the hiſtories and writings of *Euſebius*, *Socrates*, *Cyprian*, *Chryſoſtom*, *Ambroſe*, *Auguſtine*, and many others of the ancient fathers. As the blood of Chriſt is as freſh and efficacious in the preſent, as the firſt centuries of the church; ſo it ſhould be as dear and precious to Chriſtians in this as any former age.

3*dly*, It is moſt ſad that Chriſtians ſhould be ſo eaſy under the decay of piety and love to a crucified Jeſus, that is ſo viſible in theſe latter days Should not the conſideration hereof be matter of bitter lamentation and complaint to all the lovers of Chriſt, and put us inceſſantly to cry to heaven, "Wilt thou not receive us again? Renew our days as of old."

4*thly*, Is there not ground to think, that the decay of piety and Chriſtian love, in our days is much owing to the neglect and unfrequent uſe of this ſoul quickening ordinance? No wonder that our hearts turn hard, when we ſo ſeldom have recourſe to Chriſt's blood for ſoftening them, that our graces grow weak and withered, when we ſo little uſe Chriſt's appointed means for cheriſhing and ſtrengthening them; and that we have but little of the ſmiles of his face, when we ſo little regard his dying words.

Frequent communicating in Chriſt's own way and method, might be a mean, through his bleſſing, to revive decayed religion, to keep ſin under conſtant rebukes and diſgrace, and Chriſt in continual eſteem and reſpect among us. This might contribute to cure and prevent that formality in duty, careleſſneſs of ſpirit, and forgetfulneſs of Chriſt, which ſo wofully prevails in our land.

Object. II. "If we communicate as often as you urge us, we are afraid frequency will breed formality in this duty.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, The Apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians found no ſuch bad effect of their frequent partaking; but were farther from formality, and far more ſerious, fervent, and ſpiritual in this duty, than thoſe Chriſtians who now partake but once a year.

2*dly*, Our formality in attending this ordinance is nowiſe chargeable upon the inſtitution of Chriſt, or its frequent adminiſtration; but upon the corruption and careleſſneſs of our hearts, which all Chriſtians ſhould carefully watch and wreſtle againſt, and labour in the ſtrength of Chriſt, ſo oft as they partake, to prepare for it with all ſerioufneſs and ſolemnity.

3*dly*, Were this a good reaſon againſt frequency in this duty, it might be pleaded againſt frequency in other duties alſo; and ſo we ſhould ſeldom read or hear the word, ſeldom meditate on God, pray, or ſing pſalms, leſt frequency ſhould beget formality therein. But it is a bad way of arguing, to ſay, becauſe frequency in prayer, hearing, or communicating, may occaſion formality and heart-wanderings, therefore I will ſeldom pray, &c. No; the inference ſhould rather be, Therefore I will watch over my heart more carefully, I will look for the renewed influences of the Spirit, and ſtrive to be more ſincere and fervent in duty.

4*thly*, Though frequency in partaking ſhould have a bad effect on ſome, yet it hath and will have a good effect upon others, who make conſcience of preparing for the duty. Inſtead of breeding formality, it doth beget the greater livelineſs and ſpirituality in them, and raiſe their appetite the more after the heavenly manna. It

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rtain, the oftener we carefully and believingly nunicate, the better diſpoſed we ſhall be for new oaches.

bject. III. " The Jews did partake of the paſſover once in the year."

nſ. God fixed the paſſover to a certain day of the , to mind them of their temporal deliverance from ɔt, as well as of their future redemption by the ſiah's death at that time; and therefore it was an- . But, beſides that, they had their daily ſacrifices ain beaſts in the temple, which were lively types of ſt, and a remembrance to them of his death; ſo that Jews did not need ſuch a frequent celebration of the ɔver for that end. But in the new teſtament church ſt hath ſettled only his ſupper as the great ordinance ɔmmemoration of his death and ſufferings; and efore we ought not to confine ourſelves to the Jews ıal cuſtom: Nay, on the contrary, Chriſtians now, whom Chriſt hath made ſuch bright diſcoveries of ove, in ſacrificing himſelf upon a croſs for their ſal- ɔn, ſhould far exceed the Jews (who lived in ſuch times) in expreſſing love to their Saviour, and in ɔrating the memorials of his love to them. The of the primitive Chriſtians was ſo warm this way, they thought themſelves bound to celebrate their pel-paſſover in remembrance of a crucified Chriſt a-week, which the Jews did but once a-year.

bject. IV. " But," ſaith one, " my buſineſs and cal- in the world is ſuch, that I have not liberty for fre- ıt communicating, neither have I occaſions near me loing it."

nſ. 1*ſt*, I grant that all men cannot communicate a- often, ſeeing the worldly calling and affairs of one do adminiſter more diſtraction than thoſe of ano- ! And ſome cannot command their time ſo much thers.

dly, People ſhould do what lies in them to order r affairs ſo beforehand, that they may have freedom frequent communicating. But if perſons have bu-

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ſineſs brought on them, not by themſelves, but by the providence of God, they are excuſe able for their omiſſion at one occaſion; but then they ſhould be careful to lay hold upon the next In keeping of the paſſover, there was a diſpenſation allowed to thoſe that were under ceremonial uncleanneſs, or engaged in buſineſs on a journey, Numb. ix yet it was allowed, not for a year, but for a month's omiſſion. For, when they could not keep it upon the 14th of the firſt month, they were ordered to keep it on the 14th of the next month, and not to ſtay until the next annual revolution, Numb. ix 10, 11. As it would be agreeable to this injunction, ſo it would be a deſireable attainment in the church and an advantage to the members of it, if matters were ſo ordered among us, that, when perſons are neceſſarily hindered from partaking of the Lord's ſupper in their own congregation, they might be ſure of an occaſion to do it next month, if not in their own, at leaſt in the neighbouring congregation.

Object. V. "The laſt time I was at the Lord's table I got no benefit by it; nay, I fear I communicated unworthily: Now, for me to come frequently in this manner, I fear to contract greater guilt, and do myſelf more hurt than good. Therefore I will not ſoon adventure upon another approach."

Anſ. 1*ſt*, There are ſome good things implied in this objection, ſuch as, a review of former actions, ſome ſenſe of ſin and trouble for it, and a loathneſs to offend God; which are ſome deſireable tokens of repentance, and may yield ſome comfort to an exerciſed ſoul.

2*dly*, In this caſe, long deferrings will do you more hurt than frequent communicating: For, as by too much faſting, we often loſe our ſtomachs; ſo, by long withdrawing from the Lord's table, you may come to loſe your deſire after the food of your ſouls, and to have a low eſteem of Chriſt, and of his ſolemn ordinance.

3*dly*, The is no communicant, but, upon a review, may ſpy many defects in his frame and preparation, for which he could not anſwer, if God did enter into judgment with him: But he muſt not therefore abandon his duty, but flee to Chriſt's fountain for waſhing, and to the covert

covert of his righteouſneſs, to ſkreen all his imperfections. We read of ſeverals in Hezekiah's time, 2 Chron. xxx. that were not ſo ſuitably prepared for the paſſover as they ſhould have been, and ate it otherwiſe than it was written; and yet, upon Hezekiah's praying for them, God pardoned their ſin, and healed them.

4thly, It may yield comfort to a troubled ſoul, if upon a review he can ſay, it was his earneſt deſire to communicate humbly, with a lively frame, and the exerciſe of all the ſacramental graces; and whatever ſhort-comings he was chargeable with, they were not wilful and allowed, but matter of grief and mourning to him. If this be your caſe, then your defects are ſins of infirmity, which your gracious God will pardon for Chriſt's ſake.

5thly, Whatever your ſhort-comings formerly have been, you ought to be humbled for the them, flee to the blood of Chriſt for pardon, and reſolve in his ſtrength to come more reverently, humbly and believingly, to his table for the future, and that in order to renew your covenant with God, and receive a ſeal of the pardon of all your former ſins, and, particularly, of the ſin of unworthy communicating. And this you may expect, if you perſevere in the road of duty, looking to God in Chriſt, who is ſtill ready to welcome and pardon the penitent believer: But to abſent and withdraw from God's ordinance, is to put yourſelf out of the road of his mercy, and to aggravate your former ſin of unſuitable partaking.

Object. VI. "If we did communicate ſo frequently, we would not have ſuch time to prepare ourſelves for this ordinance as were needful, and as now we have."

Anſ. If we did partake more frequently, leſs pains and time about preparation work might be more ſucceſsful, and ſooner reach the end, than all the pains and time we now beſtow that way: For thus we might be helped to keep up a communion-frame habitually, and it would be no ſuch difficulty (as now we find it) to get the tears of repentance poured out, or the fire of divine love blown up, when called to celebrate this ordinance.

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The believer, when in a frame, the oftener he comes to the communion, he adds the more nouriſhment, and hath the greater delight in it; and ſo he comes to have ſuch a longing for the ordinance as the child hath for the mother's breaſt.

DIRECT. IV. Be perſuaded of the neceſſity of ſolemn preparation before you approach to the Lord's table.

IF we be required to take heed to ourſelves when we enter the houſe of the Lord, Eccleſ. v. 1. much more doth it concern us to look to ourſelves when we approach the table of the Lord. Why? This holy table is under the goſpel the ſolemn tryſting-place of the great God, where he uſeth to meet with men, and to entertain converſe and communion with them. And, have we not then ground to call to you in the prophet's words, Amos iv. 12. "Prepare to meet thy God, O Iſrael?" Remember who it is that tryſts with you; it is God, even thy God. Did an Angel tryſt to meet you at a certain place, againſt ſuch an hour, would you not prepare with all ſerioufneſs and ſolemnity to keep tryſt with him? Oh, but it is the God of Angels that tryſts with you here; even that God, before whom all the Angels adore, and the devils tremble: A holy and jealous God, who hath declared that he will be ſanctified in them that come nigh to him, Lev. x. 3. And can you come ſo near him any where in the world, as at his holy table? What Samuel ſpoke to the Elders of Bethlehem, in the caſe of offering ſacrifice, may well be applied to communicants in the caſe of approaching to the Lord's table, 1 Sam. xvi. 5. "Sanctify yourſelves, and come with me to the ſacrifice." So, well may your miniſters ſay to you *Sanctify yourſelves, and come with me to the ſacrament.* Come here, and behold the ſacrifice of the lamb of God unto divine juſtice for your ſins: For "even Chriſt our paſſover is ſacrificed for us, 1 Cor. v. 7. Here he is repreſented as a lamb ſlain, to pacify a holy God for our impurity and unholineſs. It

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is moſt fit then that we prepare and ſanctify ourſelves, when we adventure ſo near this holy God, and take upon us to celebrate the commemoration of this bleſſed ſacrifice in our goſpel-paſſover.

The Jews had their preparation for their paſſover, John xix. 14. They took the paſchal lamb and ſet it apart from the reſt of the flock on the tenth day of the month, but did not kill it till the *fourteenth*, Exod. xii. 6. And during the four days the lamb was kept alive (Jewiſh rabbies tell us) they tied it to their bed-poſts, that hearing the bleatings of the lamb as they came in and went out, lay down and roſe up, two things thereby might be brought to their remembrance: 1*ſt*, They might look back to Egypt, and remember the ſorrows and bondage they endured there, and be thankful for their redemption; and, eſpecially, for their deliverance from the deſtroying Angel, that night he paſſed over their houſes, which were ſprinkled with the blood of the lamb: 2*dly*, They were to look forward to the Meſſiah, and remember the bitter agonies and ſufferings he was to endure for their ſins. Thus the paſchal lamb for ſeveral days was to be prepared for its ſufferings, to teach the people of God ſolemnly to prepare themſelves for eating thereof, and therein to celebrate the memorial of the Meſſiah's ſufferings, which were thereby typified. That the four days ſeparation of the lamb was a connual ſtanding ſermon, preaching and preparation, to the Iſraelites, as if God had ſaid to them, *Be ye alſo ſequeſtrated from the world, and take time to think on the bleatings of the lamb, the agonies of Chriſt, and prepare yourſelves for this ſolemn ordinance.* Oh, what ſhall we ſay of thoſe, who, inſtead of *four days*, never ſpent *four hours*, in ſerious preparation for our great *goſpel-paſſover!* No worthy communicant, as ſoon as you hear the Lord's ſupper intimated, let the lamb be tied to your bed-poſts; entertain the lively meditation of your Redeemer's ſufferings, and beg preparation of heart from God, for celebrating the memorial thereof. Was our Lord ſo long a time in preparing for them, and ſhall we take no time in preparing to behold them, eſpecially when it is ſo highly for our advantage ſo to do?

We read, that the primitive Chriſtians, and ancient fathers, uſed to ſit up whole nights at prayer, before they approached to the Lord's table, which they called their *Vigiliæ.*

In this ordinance, God makes great preparations for us; he hath provided a feaſt which hath coſt more than ten thouſand kingdoms, or a million of worlds: And, ought not the gueſts, who are honoured with an invitation to it, to make great and ſolemn preparation for it? Were we called to dine with an earthly prince, we would dreſs ourſelves, and ſee to have every thing about us in good order: But here we are called to feaſt with a holy and all ſeeing God, who will infallibly ſpy out every unprepared communicant, "when he comes to ſee the gueſts," Matt. xxii. 11.

If the linen on the communion-table, or the veſſels that contain the elements, were foul, you would be ready to cry out, It is a horrid ſhame and abomination to ſee them in ſuch a caſe; and ſo, indeed, it would, for there ought to be an outward decency in theſe things; our Lord would have the very room in good order, where he was to eat the paſſover. But, O, it is a ſmall crime to have a foul cloth or veſſel for receiving the outward elements, in reſpect of what it is to have a foul heart, an unprepared ſoul, to receive the body and blood of Chriſt.

Joſeph prepared himſelf, by ſhaving himſelf and changing his raiment, before he went in unto Pharaoh; and, wilt thou not prepare thyſelf, by putting thy ſoul in the holieſt dreſs and humbleſt poſture, when thou art to go in to the King of heaven and earth? O communicant, thou exceedingly wrongeſt thine own ſoul, if thou do it not. *Preparation* is the ſeed time, *receiving* is the harveſt: "As a man ſoweth, ſo ſhall he reap. He who ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap alſo ſparingly: And he who ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap alſo bountifully, 2 Cor. ix. 6. It is in the duty of *partaking*, as in the duty of *praying*, the more prepared the heart is to pray, the greater is a man's return from heaven, Pſal. x. 17. "Thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cauſe thine ear to hear." So, in the caſe of receiving, it may be ſaid, *Thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cauſe thine hand to give.* When God

God gives us a heart prepared for duty, it is a token he hath a hand prepared for mercy.

Hence it is, that the Lord makes that gracious promiſe, Pſal. lxxx. 10. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." I'll enlarge my hand, as you enlarge your hearts. He ſaith, as Joſeph to his ſteward, Gen. xliv. 1. "Fill the mens ſacks with food, as much as they can carry." According as Joſeph's brethren prepared ſacks in number and largeneſs, ſo did they carry corn away; and the fewer and ſmaller ſacks they had, the leſs they carried away. So here, if you bring prepared and enlarged hearts to the ordinance, you ſhall be ſupplied with as much as you can carry.

DIRECT. V. Conſider, that both habitual and actual preparation is requiſite for worthy communicating.

1. HABITUAL Preparation is neceſſary to every communicant, *that is*, that he be a believer, a man in a gracious ſtate, furniſhed with the graces of the Spirit, endued with knowledge, faith, repentance, love, and new obedience. No man is fit to approach the Lord's table, till he have theſe gracious habits planted in his ſoul. He muſt be a man that is renewed inwardly by the Spirit of God, and aims at holineſs in all manner of converſation. This *new wine* muſt not be put into an old veſſel, elſe the wine will be ſpilt, and the veſſel periſh. It was an ancient abuſe of this ſacrament, condemned by the Carthaginian council, to give it to dead men; ſo it is an abuſe condemned by the word of God, to give it to dead ſouls, and thoſe who have no ſpiritual life. Under the law, God did forbid the offering of ſacrifices that either were blind or lame, Mal. i. 8. and they that were ceremonially unclean, could not keep the paſſover. The ignorant perſon's ſacrifice is blind, for he cannot give account of his own work: The hypocrite's ſacrifice is lame, for he halteth in God's way: The profane man is morally unclean, and ſo cannot entertain communion with a holy God. Holineſs becomes God's houſe, and

in a ſpecial manner his table. Habitual holineſs is requiſite for all that would be worthy communicants. You muſt be holy univerſally, holy in the frame of your hearts, and in all the actions of your lives; holy in your ſhops, by diligence and juſtice; holy at your tables, by ſobriety and thankfulneſs; holy in the ſtreets, by an innocent uſeful converſation; holy in your cloſets, by prayer and meditation. Yea, you muſt account your whole lives nothing but an opportunity of ſerving a holy God, and of mortifying ſin and corruption; and this habitual holineſs would diſpoſe your ſouls for the acts of immediate worſhip.

But unholy perſons are altogether unprepared for ſuch a near approach to God. Hearts full of rancour and malice, are not meet to come to this feaſt of love: Feet that walk in the ways of ſin, are not fit to tread in God's holy place: Hands ſtained with injuſtice are unfit to handle theſe holy myſteries; mouths that are polluted with ſwearing and evil ſpeaking, are not fit to eat and drink the ſacred ſymbols of Chriſt's body and blood; eyes defiled with unchaſte looks, and bewitched with the world's vanities, are unfit to look on the holy Jeſus; ears that entertain reproaches of God's people, and hearken not to the counſels of his word, are not fit to hear the joyful ſound of pardon intimated at his table. They who expect the King of glory to enter into their ſouls, at the ſolemn occaſion, muſt have the doors thereof cleanly and pure. Unhallowed ſinners are not fit to receive this hallowed bread and wine. Our Lord's body never ſaw corruption in the grave, nor will he lodge in thoſe bodies that are as nauſeous ſepulchres, and corrupt ſinks of ſin. It lay only in a *Virgin womb and ſepulchre*, to ſhew that he will only reſide in *virgin ſouls* that are devoted and conſecrated to his uſe, and kept pure and chaſte for his ſervice, and do not entertain his rivals. I grant, indeed, impure thoughts will ſometimes be crowding into the beſt hearts; but if we do not entertain them, but ſincerely ſtrive againſt them, and earneſtly wiſh for better company, it is a token Chriſt's ſpirit hath entered, and is about his work of purifying the heart.

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If we would be habitually prepared for the Lord's table, we muſt be daily acquaint with the work of mortification and true repentance. We muſt always eye ſin as our Saviour's deadly enemy, have no pity on it, but ſeverely condemn ourſelves for every treſpaſs, inſtantly grieve for it, look to the blood of ſprinkling for pardon, renew our reſolutions to amend, and pray for ſpecial ſtrength againſt every particular ſin. We muſt daily meditate on precious Chriſt, and upon his firſt and ſecond coming, and live continually in the view of death. And, if we lived thus, it would not be ſo hard to prepare ourſelves for the Lord's table. If we lived in a habitual preparation for the day of death, we would alſo be habitually prepared for the day of communion. Had we God frequently in our thoughts, and lived conſtantly under the ſenſe of his all-ſeeing eye; on the communion-day we ſhould find little elſe to do but to revive our graces by the exerciſe of prayer and praiſe.

II. Actual preparation is alſo neceſſary before our approach to the Lord's table. Seeing, alas, the moſt part of Chriſtians, in this degenerate age, are ſo defective in their habitual preparation for this ordinance; they ought to be the more diligent in actual preparations for it. And this doth conſiſt of a great many particulars; ſuch as, 1. Sequeſtrating ourſelves from the world: 4. Self-examination: 3. Humiliation for ſin: 4. Renewing our perſonal covenant with God in Chriſt: 5. Reformation of what is amiſs: 6. Exciting of all the graces to a lively exerciſe: 7. Meditation on the death and ſufferings of Jeſus Chriſt: 8. Earneſt prayer to God for preparation and aſſiſtance in the work. All theſe belong to our actual preparation for the Lord's ſupper; and of them I ſhall afterwards treat more particularly.

Only I ſhall here obſerve, that both habitual and actual preparation muſt go together, if we would be worthy communicants. We muſt both have grace in the habit, and grace in the lively exerciſe. All wiſe virgins that wait for the coming of the bridegroom, do take care to have oil ſtill in their veſſels, as well as in their lamps: Nay, they muſt ſee to have their lamps burning every day. But when they hear that the bridegroom is actually

actually coming, then, in order to meet him, they do arise and fall afresh to the trimming of their lamps; they snuff them, stir up the light, and apply more oil to make them burn the brighter and clearer. And thus ought you to do, O communicant, if you would have a joyful meeting with your lovely bridegroom in the sacrament. Nay, if you come not with actual, as well as habitual, preparation, the sacrament may prove to you as the summer brooks to the thirsty traveller, of which Job speaks, Job vi. 19, 20. "The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them. They were confounded, because they had hoped; they came thither and were ashamed." Some come to the sacrament with a sort of actual preparation, but have no habitual preparation, no grace in the habit. Some again have habitual preparation, but not actual preparation; they want grace in the exercise. Both these will go from the ordinance, as the troops of Tema and companies of Sheba, disappointed of spiritual refreshment. If we would reap spiritual advantage in this ordinance, we must take care to be ready both ways, habitually and actually; for it is only such that the all-seeing master of the feast will look upon as worthy communicants.

Direct. VI. Be convinced of the greatness of the sin, and hazard of unworthy communicating.

WE are told both the one and the other in very plain terms, 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of Lord." And again, "He eateth and drinketh damnation *or* judgment to himself." So that we see the sin or crime is no less than that of murdering of Jesus Christ, and of being found accomplices of the Jews and soldiers, who imbrewed their cruel hands in the innocent blood of the Son of God, which is a most dreadful charge! The hazard which this sin exposes to, is both temporal strokes, and eternal damnation. Seeing I have spoke of the nature and danger of this sin, *Sacr. Cat.* p. 107, 108, 110, &c. *(first Edit.)* I shall say the less in this place.

Only

Only to communicate unworthily, is to approach in an unworthy ſtate, or in an unſuitable frame, or with wrong ends. When a perſon comes to the Lord's table in ignorance, without ſelf-examination, without grief for ſin, love to Chriſt, or faith in his blood, and is unprepared for this ſolemn ordinance, then he is an unworthy communicant.

Now, this muſt be a very heinous ſin; for it imports your undervaluing the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, as if it were the blood of an impoſtor or malefactor. For, if you look on the ſufferings of Chriſt here repreſented, as the ſufferings of the innocent Son of God, and glorious Saviour of mankind; why do you not come ſuitably affected therewith, and grieved for your ſins that were the cauſe thereof? But, if you do not really own or regard them as ſuch, then, on the matter, you charge Jeſus Chriſt as being the greateſt impoſtor and criminal in the world, in declaring himſelf to be the Son of God and Saviour of ſinners, when, in your eſteem, he was not.

If you ſay, *God forbid we be guilty of this, we own Chriſt to be the Son of God, and the King of glory*; why then are you guilty of treaſon, and of offering the greateſt indignity to your prince, by throwing his picture or great ſeal into a mire, by defacing and defiling a ſtatue erected for his honour and remembrance? For any diſhonour done to the image or repreſentation reflects upon the original. What horrid contempt would it be for a ſubject to come in with naſty clothes and filthy hands, and offer to ſit down at his ſovereign's table, and dip into the diſh with him? Now, all this, and much worſe, you do, when you ſit down unpreparedly at the Lord's table, and eat and drink unworthily.

Nay, you are hereby guilty of the baſeſt diſingenuity, and of ſolemn mocking of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: For, by coming to the Lord's table, you pretend to be doing honour to Chriſt, to be deeply affected with his ſufferings, and to declare your abhorrence of ſin, that was the cauſe thereof. Now, when there is really no ſuch thing, but, on the contrary, ſin is hugged and embraced, what is this but horrid diſſimulation with an all-ſeeing God?

yea

yea, it is an acting of Judas's part over again, a "betraying of the Son of man with a kiss."

But, which is worst of all, by this sin you become "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord:" For, as he is justly reckoned accessory to a murder, who either consents to it, makes light of it, or that abets and entertains the murderers: So unworthy communicants, who look upon the death and sufferings of the Son of God without remorse for their sins that pierced him, nay, love and lodge these traitors in their hearts that betrayed and crucified the Lord of glory, are plainly accessory to the Jews horrid guilt of shedding the blood of Jesus Christ.

It is a fearful thing to be guilty of any man's blood, even of the blood of a wicked man: But, how much more to be guilty of the blood of a righteous person, even of the Holy One of God? Simple murder is a crying sin, Gen. iv. 10. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground." It cries so, that it gives God no rest, as it were, till he come and take vengeance on the shedder of it. Nature's light taught the *Barbarians* that *vengeance would not suffer a murderer to live*, Acts xxviii. 4. But, O what a cry do you think the innocent blood of Christ must have against the guilty communicant! It is terrible to have that blood which pleads for sinners, crying against thee. Christ's blood applied by faith, "speaks better things than the blood of Abel:" But when it is trampled on in the sacrament, it doth speak and cry worse things than the blood of Abel; it will cry for more terrible vengeance than Abel's blood did. Wo to that poor soul, for whom Christ's blood speaks not, but ten thousand woes to that soul which this blood speaks against.

It is the worst kind of treason, to shed the blood of an earthly king; but, what wickedness must it be to shed the blood of the King of kings, one drop whereof is more precious than all the blood which ever ran in the veins of the kings and princes of the world since its first creation! We see what David said concerning the motion for killing king Saul: "Who can stretch out his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?"

1 Sam.

1 Sam. xxvi. 9. But, O who can be guiltleſs that ſtretches out his hand againſt the Son of God? "Had Zimri peace who ſlew his maſter?" cried Jezebel to Jehu, 2 Kings ix. 31. And thinkeſt thou to have peace, O communicant, that goeſt to ſlay thy maſter and Redeemer too? If God declared, that on him who ſlew Cain, "vengeance ſhould be taken ſeven-fold?" Gen. iv. 15. What vengeance ſhall be taken on him that ſlayeth Jeſus Chriſt? Hadſt thou never harſh thoughts of the Jews for their cruelty to the Son of God, and yet wilt thou be guilty of worſe thyſelf? The Jews crucified him but once, but thou, by continuing to be an unworthy receiver, crucifieſt him often; they did it ignorantly, but thou doſt it knowingly. And the time when thou committeſt this ſin, makes thy guilt prodigiouſly great. Would it not be reckoned a piece of the moſt barbarous wickedneſs in a poor traveller, that was found ſtarving by the way-ſide, and out of pity taken in by a perſon given to hoſpitality, for him to riſe up, without any provocation, and ſtab his kind friend, while he were entertaining him at his own table? What a monſtrous crime would this be! But, how much more is it for you to pierce and ſtab Jeſus Chriſt, when he is making a rich feaſt for you, diſplaying his banner of love, and inviting you to take ſanctuary in his wounds!

It was a dreadful curſe and imprecation that the Jews wiſh'd againſt themſelves, Mat. xxvii. 25 "His blood be on us and upon our children." And now it has accordingly lien upon their heads theſe 1600 years, which has made them the moſt miſerable people on the face of the earth. And wilt thou venture, by a raſh approach to the Lord's table, to bring the Jews curſe upon thyſelf? Nay, ſtand in awe of this ſin, and the curſe following on it, and ſay with David, (when Abiſhai perſuaded him to ſlay Saul) "The Lord forbid that I ſhould ſtretch forth my hand againſt the Lord's anointed." So, when ſatan or thy own heart would perſuade thee to be ſlight in thy ſelf-examination, formal in thy humiliation for ſin, and careleſs in thy preparation for this ordinance, that thou mighteſt be guilty of the body and

blood of the Lord; let conſcience then cry out, *God forbid that I ſhould ſtretch out my hand againſt Jeſus Chriſt the Lord's anointed. How can I do this wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God,* and wrong my own ſoul?

O communicant, if thou venture on this horrid crime, God will remember it againſt thee, and make it bitter to thee another day in another place, if mercy prevent not. As Reuben told his brethren when they were in diſtreſs, Gen. xlii. 22. "Spake I not unto you, ſaying, ſin not againſt the child, and ye would not hear? Therefore, behold, his blood is required." So, if you approach to the Lord's table in ſin, or in a formal way, and without preparation, then look for it, when affliction, ſickneſs, or death, comes; or, at leaſt, in the other world, that conſcience will fly in thy face, and ſay, *ſpake I not unto thee, ſaying, do not ſin againſt the holy child Jeſus, and thou wouldſt not hear? Therefore, behold, his blood is required at your hands.* And, O, what wilt thou do in ſuch an hour!

If thou wouldſt prevent ſuch a challenge, take heed to thy preparation, and notice the frame of thy heart. Remember, God will take exact notice of what reſpect thou haſt to the body and blood of his Son, and how thou prepareſt to receive it, Matt. xxii. 11. 12. 13. "And when the king came to ſee the gueſts, he ſaw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment." Chriſt obſerves all thoſe that come to his table; and, if there be but one unprepared, he cannot eſcape his eye, be the number or crowd never ſo great. He obſerves with what appetite thou goeſt to this heavenly feaſt; he obſerves with what reſolution againſt ſin for time to come, thou goeſt for pardon of ſins paſt. He notices, O communicant, if thou goeſt to this goſpel-ordinance, in a goſpel order. And, wilt thou dare to trample on the blood of the Son of God, as the blood of a malefactor, and even when he himſelf ſtands and looketh on. Will not the ſenſe of his piercing eye overawe you at ſuch a time? Surely, if in any time of thy life thou would be extraordinarily ſerious, this ought to be the ſeaſon. Now thou oughteſt ſo to prepare for this feaſt, that the maſter of it may ſee thou art watchful of his eye,

eye, tender of his honour, and fearful of his anger. Forget not what was the fate of that man who came to the wedding-feaſt without a wedding-garment; when the king challenged him, *he was ſpeechleſs*, and his ſentence was, "bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and caſt him into utter darkneſs; there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth."

Remember alſo what ſtrict orders were given concerning mount Sinai, when God ſolemnly appeared on it; "If a beaſt did but touch it, it was to be ſtricken through with a dart." And, wilt thou venture to touch the table of the Lord with a beaſtly heart, a heart poſſeſſed with bruti ſh luſts? Mayeſt thou not fear to be ſtricken through with a dart of God's wrath?

We read of ſome, as the emperor Henry, and Pope Victor II. that were poiſoned with the ſacrament, by the wickedneſs of the prieſts, who mingled poiſon with the bread and wine. Didſt thou, O communicant, apprehend that the bread and wine before thee were poiſoned, would not the very ſuſpicion make thee tremble to eat and drink of it? Well, if thou art an unworthy receiver, there is poiſon in it to thy ſoul, and thou haſt ground to cry to the miniſter, as the ſons of the prophets did to Eliſha, 2 Kings iv. 40, "O thou man of God, there is death in the pot;" there is poiſon in the bread, there is wrath in the cup: How ſhall I partake, till this meal be ſanctified to me, and my ſoul ſanctified for it?

Our Lord makes a queſtion, Luke xi. 11, "If a ſon aſk bread of his father, will he give him a ſtone?" No; he will not deal ſo with a ſon that comes to his table ſincerely to ſeek bread for his hungry ſoul; but with an enemy that comes unpreparedly to him, he will give a ſtone inſtead of bread: Unworthy receiving makes a *Tranſubſtantiation* here, it changeth the *bread* into a *ſtone*; ſo that it will no more nouriſh thy ſoul, than a ſtone would do thy body: Nay, like a ſtone, it will choke and kill thee, if the phyſician of ſouls do not prevent it.

We are told by the apoſtle, that unworthy receiving brings on temporal judgments, as well as ſpiritual and eternal. It brings on ſickneſs and mortality on our bo-

dies, 1 Cor. xi. 30, " For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep." And ſome think it was the peſtilence, or ſome ſuch mortal diſtemper, that the Corinthians unworthy receiving did bring on them. Well, let us think on this; ſurely, if ever the peſtilence come into Scotland, we may look on unworthy communicating as a chief cauſe of this deſolating ſtroke.

What a great riſk then, O ſinner, doſt thou run, when thou ventureſt to this holy table, without due preparation? Thou even runneſt upon the boſſes of God's buckler, and provokeſt the vengeance of God againſt thyſelf. Thou mayeſt juſtly expect that God will turn it into ſuch a feaſt to thee, as Belſhazzar's was to him, who, in the time thereof, ſaw " a hand upon the wall writing his condemnation, ſo that his countenance was changeſt, his thoughts troubled him, and his knees ſmote one againſt another." In this ordinance you make a very near approach to God that is *infinitely holy*, and who is terrible from his holy places The nearer God's altar, the fire of divine jealouſy burns the hotter; and a wrong touch or look at that time is criminal, and may coſt you dear. The Lord ſmote Uzza dead for one raſh touch which he gave the ark; he ſmote 50,000 of the men of Bethſhemeſh, for an irreverent look into the ark; he devoured with fire from heaven Nadab and Abihu, for offering ſtrange incenſe at his altar: And what he may do to thee for a raſh approach to his holy table, none can tell. God may make thee a monument of wrath where thou ſitteſt, ſtrike thee dead with the bread in thy mouth, or cup in thy hand; and, if it be otherwiſe, thou wilt be highly indebted to the divine patience for ſparing thee.

And, indeed, we have cauſe to be aſtoniſhed at the matchleſs goodneſs and long-ſuffering of God, in ſuffering ſo many thouſands of vile murderers to live ſo long in this world, and that he ſhould ſuffer them to approach his table, and to wound and ſtab his dear Son over and over again, when he hath flames and vengeance at command, and can more eaſily cruſh them all, than we can do a moth; and, which is yet more, that he ſhould unto ſuch murderers make and repeat his offers

fers of that blood which they have ſpilt, to waſh them from the guilt of ſhedding it. And indeed it is this, and nothing but this, which is able to do it.

But, though God be patient and merciful, he will not bear always with ſuch criminals: no, he hath many ſpiritual and inviſible judgements, which he inflicts upon them. He makes fearful breaches upon their ſouls. He frequently lets looſe ſatan againſt them, ſo that ſatan enters in with the ſop. And, how fearful a thing is it, for the devil to be permitted to enter into a man or woman, and to do it at the Lord's table, ſo that the man riſes up from this holy table with more eagerneſs after his luſts, and with more reſolution and ſtrength to do the devil's ſervice, than before? And thus the *table of the Lord* becomes the *table of devils*, and the *cup of the Lord* the *cup of devils*, to ſuch perſons. And, ſhould God alſo let looſe ſatan againſt their bodies, as upon Judas after the ſop, what terrible havock would he make among unworthy communicants? How fearfully would he revenge the blood of Chriſt? Many communion-tables would he turn into Golgothas and Aceldamas, places of *ſkulls* and fields of *blood*.

As the ſweeteſt wine becomes the ſharpeſt vinegar, ſo communion-love, when abuſed, brings the foreſt wrath. The death and ſufferings of Jeſus Chriſt are the moſt ſerious and awful things that can be preſented in the world, and therefore not to be dallied with. The blood of Chriſt is the moſt precious thing in the world, and therefore a drop cannot be ſpilt without a cry for vengeance. And, have not the beſt of us, alas, ground to fear we have contracted much of this guilt? Were our hearts never hard, our affections dead, our ſpirits carnal, and our minds wandering, when we have ſat down at the Lord's table? Nay, have we not all reaſon to cry with David, Pſal. li. "Deliver me from blood-guiltineſs, O God, thou God of my ſalvation, and my tongue ſhall ſing aloud of thy loving-kindneſs?" Ought we not all carefully to guard and earneſtly to pray againſt this crying ſin, and ſo prepare ourſelves for this

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holy table, that we may not poiſon our precious ſouls with that choice cordial, which is intended for our health and eternal welfare?

DIRECT. VII. In order to your better preparation for the Lord's ſupper, ſequeſtrate yourſelves from worldly cares and buſineſs ſome time before.

WHEN you ſee the time of this ſolemn approach drawing near, *ſeparate yourſelves from the world*, and ſet earthly thoughts aſide, that you may the better apply yourſelf to the ſpiritual work you have in hand. Under the law, the Jews were unfit for keeping the paſſover at the time appointed, in two caſes, Numb. ix. either if they had *touched a dead body*, or were in *a journey*. The firſt made a man unclean, ſo that he behoved not to meddle with that holy ordinance, till he were cleanſed according to the inſtituted method, which took up ſome time to do it. The ſecond made him unfit, in regard his mind and thoughts would be ſo diſtracted with the buſineſs of his journey, that he could not be in a compoſed frame for keeping the paſſover: His heart would be unfixed and diſturbed with worldly thoughts.

There are not a few who ſeem to think, if they be free from a *dead body*, i. e. if they be not defiled with ſome groſs or ſcandalous ſin, they are fit enough for the ſacrament; and that they may approach to it, though they have their hearts *in journeys* travelling up and down after their worldly affairs. No, be not miſtaken; a *journey* unfits you for the goſpel-paſſover, as well as a *dead body*: a journeying earthly heart, as well as a notour defilement by any groſs ſin. If you would be worthy receivers, you muſt be abſtracted from the cares and vanities of this lower world, and ſeek after a ſtayed, ſpiritual, and heavenly frame of heart. Be not as men in a journey when ye come to the Lord's table, but lay aſide all wandering and earthly thoughts; for, if you harbour theſe about ſuch a time, you will not be in caſe

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to anſwer the apoſtle's rule, 1 Cor. vii. 35. " Attend upon the Lord without diſtraction."

We are told, that in the temple of Jeruſalem, notwithſtanding of the great abundance of fleſh ſacrificed in it, not one flie was to be ſeen ſtirring there. And ſo it ſhould be with us at the ſacrament; not a flie of an earthly or wandering thought ſhould be allowed to buzz or ſtir there. Now, if theſe flies be not driven away before-hand, they will ſurely peſter you in the temple, and trouble you when you have moſt to do; nay, they will mar the duty, and corrupt the ſacrifice, as that grievous ſwarm of flies (mentioned Exod. viii. 24.) did the land of Egypt.

It is a ſhrewd ſign, then, that thoſe who bring earthly and wandering hearts with them to the Lord's table are Egyptians, not true Iſraelites; ſeeing they have the Egyptian plagues of flies upon them. In the forecited place we are told, that there came a grievous ſwarm of flies into the houſes of Pharaoh and his ſervants, and into all the land of Egypt, ſo that the land was corrupted thereby; but in the land of Goſhen, where the Iſraelites dwelt, there were no ſwarms of flies. So, if ye would be worthy communicants, ye ſhould be at the ſacrament, like the Iſraelites in Goſhen, free of that Egyptian plague of flies; you muſt not have ſwarms of earthly thoughts to trouble you there with their buzzing noiſe and importunity. And the only way to be free of them is to drive them away timeouſly before, and purge your hearts of earthly affections.

You ought to do as Abraham, when he was called by God to ſacrifice Iſaac, on mount Moriah, Gen. xxii. 4. 5. " When he ſaw the place afar off, he ſaid to his young men, abide you here with the aſs, and I and the lad will go yonder and worſhip, and come again unto you. Abraham knew, if they had gone alongſt with him, they would have ſo diſturbed him, with their calamour and noiſe, that he could not have offered the ſacrifice with any freedom and tranquillity of ſpirit; therefore when he ſaw the place afar off, he orders them to ſtay behind. The ſame ſhould we be doing with our worldly affairs when we ſee the time afar off, and much more

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when we ſee the time approaching and at hand: Then we ſhould give ſtrict orders to all our earthly thoughts and buſineſs to ſtand aſide; and not only not to go to the mount with us, but to go to our cloſets and retiring places with us. Poſſibly at ſuch a time ſome affair of importance may offer to thy mind, and require to be conſidered; but treat all ſecular avocations as Nehemiah did Sanballat and Geſhem, when they ſent to him, Neh. vi. 2. ſaying, "Come let us meet together in ſome of the villages," &c. But mark how he anſwers them, ver. 3. "And I ſent meſſengers to them, ſaying, I am doing a great work, ſo that I cannot come down. Why ſhould the work ceaſe, whilſt I leave it and come down to you?" And though theſe companions had ſo round and peremptory an anſwer, yet they were importuning him ſtill, ver. 4. "Yet they ſent unto me four times after this ſort." But he ſtill anſwered them in the ſame manner. Thus it will be with a man when he begins to ſequeſtrate himſelf for actual preparation for the ſacrament; this and the other buſineſs will be calling upon him, that it may be conſidered and attended: But let your anſwer be, "I am doing a great work, I am preparing myſelf for the ſacrament, I cannot wait upon you. Why, ſhould the work of preparation ceaſe whilſt I leave it and attend on you?" And though they haunt and importune you many times after this ſort, yet ſtill anſwer them in the ſame manner.

Likewiſe, remember how Nehemiah treated thoſe merchants that violated the ſabbath, Neh. xiii. 19. "When it began to be dark before the ſabbath, I commanded the gates to be ſhut, and charged that they ſhould not be opened till after the ſabbath; and ſome of my ſervants I ſet at the gates." Do ſo with your worldly affairs, ſhut up the gates on your hearts againſt them, and let them not be opened till all the duties of the ſolemn occaſion be ended. Perhaps, like thoſe merchants, they will be hovering about the gates for entrance: And therefore ſet conſcience to watch at the gates, teſtify againſt them, rebuke and threaten them, as Nehemiah did. Let thy ſpirit, in a holy indignation, riſe againſt them; check

check and chace them from you, as coming moſt unſeaſonably to the hurt and prejudice of thy precious ſoul.

As our Saviour ſays about prayer, Mat. vi. 6. "Enter into thy cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut thy door, pray;" ſo may I ſay concerning preparation for the ſacrament, enter into thy cloſet, and, when thou haſt ſhut thy door, prepare thyſelf by meditation, ſelf examination, and prayer; and eſpecially ſhut the doors of thy heart againſt ſecular cares and earthly thoughts about thy buſineſs, and then ſet about the work. The work is ſo weighty, that it requires all thy thoughts to be employed about it. It concerns you to put your ſoul in the ſame order and ſtate, as if God were calling you to ſurrender it to him by death; and, if you be not ready to die, neither are you to receive the ſacrament. All communicants ſhould be in ſuch a poſture as our Lord directs, Luke xii. 35. 36. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourſelves like unto men that wait for their Lord, that, when he cometh and knocketh, you may open to him immediately." Now, if your hearts be incumbered with wordly things, you cannot be in caſe to anſwer this direction; you cannot be in a fit attentive poſture to meet with, and wait upon the Maſter of the feaſt. O communicant, wouldſt thou have this ordinance comfortable? ſay then, ſometimes before it, Farewell, my wife and children, friends and ſecular concerns; abide you here at the foot of the mount: Be huſhed and mortified, all irregular paſſions and affections; you are a clog to my ſoul, I have ſomething elſe to do than attend you.

It is moſt lamentable to conſider how many come to the ſacrament in ſuch an unprepared manner. Many are in their *journeys* when thy ſit down at the Lord's table; many, Egyptian-like, are environed with a *ſwarm of flies*, wandering and earthly thoughts; many bring their *ſervants and aſſes* to the very mount of ſacrifice; many leave the Lord's work in the very middle, to meet with their *Sanballats* and *Geſhems*; they open the *gates* on the very ſacrament-day to their *merchants*: Nay, the world is both in their hearts and mouths about this ſolemn occaſion.

If we should ask the question at many communicants, which our Lord asked the two disciples he overtook going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 17. "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk by the way?" What manner of conference and communications were those ye had together, when ye went home from the preparation-sermon? Nay, those ye had the very morning as ye walked together to the church to receive the sacrament? How ashamed would many communicants be to tell what past amongst them! There are many who could not answer them with these two disciples, v. 19. "concerning Jesus of Nazareth;" we were talking concerning a *crucified Jesus*, our lovely Redeemer; concerning the advantage of meeting with him in the sacrament, and the preparation needful for that end. Nay, it is to be feared, the answer of many would be, if they should be ingenuous, we were talking about our corn, cattle, merchandise, families, relations, &c.; these things, alas, many bring in their mouths to the very church-door. But, should we search more narrowly, and propose another question: "What manner of thoughts were those you entertained that night, or that morning, before the sacrament?" Oh, the world would cry, *Fy and shame* on the thoughts of many if they were known. Well, remember it, our all-seeing Lord knows them all, and you may expect he will answer you according to the idols of your heart. O purge your hearts from vain thoughts and sequestrate yourselves from worldly business, if you would rightly prepare for this ordinance, and profit in partaking of it.

DIRECT. VIII. Set some time apart for the work of self-examination, before you approach to the Lord's table.

THIS is a duty indispensibly necessary unto worthy partaking, 1 Cor. xi. 28. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." The word which the apostle useth here, *dokimazeto*, signifies a diligent and narrow search into the nature and properties of a thing, as a goldsmith proves the goodness

goodneſs of his metal. It lies in a cloſe and free communing with our own hearts, by ſifting our ſouls before the tribunal of conſcience, and bringing our ſtate and actions to be tried there by the rule of God's word. Self-examination is a reflex act of the mind, whereby we turn our eyes backward, and take a view of our by-paſt life; and alſo inward, in order to ranſack the ſtate of our hearts, and the principles and ſcope of our actions, by putting ſuch queſtions to ourſelves as theſe, "What have we been doing? Wherein have we offended? What are we doing now? Where am I, and whither do I deſign to go? What ſhall I do to be ſaved? Wherewithal ſhall I appear before the Lord?" This duty ſuppoſes a ſerious pauſe of the ſoul, an arreſting of the thoughts, and an awakening of our powers and faculties to be attentive to this work, that we may proceed with all calmneſs and ſerenity, ſeriouſneſs and deliberation, in a matter ſo important, that we may find out the truth of our ſtate, and ſincerity of our performances, the corruption of our hearts, and enormities of our lives. And this muſt be an exact and impartial ſearch. A general ſurvey of ourſelves will not ſuffice to diſcover things as they really are; for Satan and our own hearts are very deceitful, and ready to impoſe upon us in this matter: Therefore we muſt be very faithful and particular in our examination before the ſacrament, and not ſiſt in generals, or content ourſelves with a ſuperficial enquiry. Some, at ſuch an occaſion, act like Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. ii. 3. 5. "I have dreamed a dream, (ſays he) but the thing is gone from me:" So, ſay ſome, *I have ſinned, I have come ſhort*: but ſcarce can tell wherein, when put to it.

If you would deal faithfully in this work, you muſt retire from the world, and ſummon yourſelves to the bar of your own conſciences, accuſe yourſelves plainly, and try yourſelves impartially by the laws of heaven, regiſtered in the holy ſcriptures. And if you would have a juſt ſentence pronounced concerning your ſtate and ways, then ye muſt in the firſt place look up to God for light, direction, and aſſiſtance; and then ye muſt excite and awake conſcience to do its office, and to ſpeak and judge

for God: for though a judge be on the bench; yet if he be deaf, dumb, or asleep, he cannot judge. Conscience then must be roused up, and charged to act faithfully; and you should pray to God for a lively and tender conscience, that will give just and impartial judgment. A deaf conscience, that hears nothing, a dumb conscience, that speaks nothing, a sleepy conscience, that feels nothing, is the greatest plague in the world. But O it is a great mercy to have a waking and tender conscience, that will faithfully do its office in the duty of self-examination, especially before a sacrament.

This duty is absolutely necessary; for without it we cannot know how it is with us, we cannot know our plagues and miseries, our defects and necessities; and till such a time as we know these, we will neither value nor apply the remedy provided for us in the sacrament. Nay, we will be ready to mistake our condition, and think we are in a good state, that we have true grace, when really we have it not. There is much *counterfeit* grace in the world, and many are deceived therewith; yea there is no grace but what hath its *counterfeit*. What did Moses for a time, but the Egyptian sorcerers did the like? Did Moses bring frogs on the land? so did they. And the magicians blood and frogs seemed as real as those produced by Moses; and yet they were nothing but counterfeits and external appearances. So there is nothing a true Christian hath or can do, but hypocrites may have and do the same as to outward appearances. Therefore, it is necessary we bring our graces and duties to be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary.

O communicants, would you know how matters are with you now, and how it is like to fare with you for ever? Would you have your hearts affected with your condition, and made acquaint with Jesus Christ? Would you have a visit from Christ at his table? Would you have grace quickened, and your wants supplied? Would you be worthy receivers, and prevent your eating and drinking your own damnation? Then examine yourselves before ye approach. Many a Christian can declare, that the time of their searching themselves in their younger years, in order to prepare for the Lord's table,

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was the very time their hearts were firſt engaged to Jeſus Chriſt and ſerious godlineſs. O wherefore is it that there are ſo many dead and formal communicants; why ſo many hard-hearted and impenitent ſinners, who could never yet be brought to mourn for their ſins, or turn from them to God and holineſs? The reaſon is plain from God's word, Jer. viii. 6. Lam. iii. 40. Pſal. cxix. 59. They are ſtrangers to the duty of ſelf-examination.

If you neglect to examine yourſelves, remember you have to do with an all-ſeeing and heart-ſearching God, who will not fail to examine and find out every careleſs and unworthy communicant to his utter ſhame and confuſion. Chriſt, whoſe eyes are as a flame of fire, will certainly come in and ſee the gueſts, and when he comes, he will look narrowly upon them: And, though the houſe be full of gueſts, he will ſpy out "one man that wants a wedding-garment, Mat. xxii. 11. In a great ground or multitude, one ſingle man might think to ſculk and not be found out; but we ſee that not one man can eſcape his piercing eyes; far leſs then can forty, fifty, or an hundred unworthy communicants think to eſcape in one of our congregations. Again, remember what was the fate of the man that came to the feaſt without the wedding garment. In the firſt place, we ſee our Lord not only ſpied and ſingled him out, but he examined him alſo. The man had come without examining himſelf before hand whether he had this wedding garment or not; but God ſmartly examined him. So that we ſee, thoſe who will not be at the pains and trouble to examine themſelves, God will examine them to purpoſe: Yea, it will be ſuch an examination, as the chief captain commanded Paul to be examined with, Acts xxii 24. viz. that he ſhould be "examined by ſcourging." Every queſtion and interrogatory that God will put to a ſinner, or any unworthy communicant, will have a laſh or ſting along with it. What a *ſcourging queſtion* did he put to that man, Mat. xxii. 12. "Friend, how cameſt thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment?" It was ſo ſharp, it drew blood of his conſcience; nay, it ſtunned and confoun-

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ded him; it is ſaid, *he was ſpeechleſs*. Friend, ſays he, why? Thou profeſſeſt thyſelf to be a friend of Chriſt, and doſt aſſociate thyſelf with his friends; but, in thy heart thou art an enemy to Chriſt, a traitor that comeſt to ſtab him under the fifth rib, "Therefore bind him hand and foot, and take him away," &c. ver. 13. In the mean time, the man is ſpeechleſs, Chriſt-condemned, and ſelf-condemned; he had nothing to ſay againſt the juſtice of the ſentence. The man that comes without a wedding garment on his back, ſhall not go without chains and fetters on his feet, his hands, yea, on his heart, his will, his conſcience, and his whole ſoul. Better for the man to have examined himſelf, and ſo to have prevented this terrible examination and ſentence.

God's queſtions to unworthy receivers will be confounding and confounding. Conſider theſe ſtinging interrogatories, Iſai. i. 12. "Who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?" Pſal. l. 16. "What haſt thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth?" Jer. vii. 9. 10. "Will ye ſteal, murder, commit adultery, and walk after other gods, and come and ſtand before me in this houſe?" Theſe be ſcourging examinations, that fetch blood at every ſtroke; and you may look for it that God will come and examine thee thus, either by an awakened conſcience in this life, or at a dying hour, or aſſoon as thou entereſt into eternity: "And who may abide the day of his coming?" Now, the way to prevent ſuch an examination, is to examine yourſelves: For, "if we would judge ourſelves, we ſhould not be judged." David did not fear God's examination, when he had examined himſelf ſincerely before hand; nay, with a humble confidence he doth appeal to God to ſearch him, Pſal. cxxxix. 23. 24. Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, &c. Wouldſt thou prevent the terror of God's ſearch, then put ſearching queſtions to yourſelf before hand, and ſee how matters are with your ſoul. It is better to have conſcience awakened to ſearch thee now, than to have it awakened in hell, where there is no place for repentance.

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This is a duty incumbent, not only on natural and unrenewed men, and upon thoſe who were not at the Lord's table before, but even upon the beſt of men, and thoſe who have communicated frequently. We can never be too ſure about our ſoul's eſtate; beſides, we daily contract new guilt, are liable to new decays, new wants, new burdens and grievances: And therefore the beſt have need to examine themſelves every time they repair to this holy feaſt, but much more they who were never there before.

Now there are ſeveral things you ought to enquire into at ſuch a time. 1. The ſtate and condition of your ſouls. 2. Your ſins and ſhortcomings. 3. Your wants and neceſſities. 4. Your ends and deſigns. 5. Your graces and qualifications.

I have diſcourſed all theſe points very fully in my ſacramental catechiſm, from page 117. to page 210. *(firſt edit.)* to which the reader is referred. Some few things more I ſhall add here.

I. *Of the Examination of our State.*

Seeing this holy feaſt belongs only to the children of God, and thoſe that are ſtrangers have no right to it, it highly concerns all that deſign to approach to the Lord's table, to examine what ſtate they are in. As the Lord cried to Adam in the garden, *Adam, where art thou?* ſo do thou cry to thy ſoul, O my ſoul, where art thou? Art thou in the broad way or in the narrow? Whether art thou in Satan's or in Chriſt's camp? Whether under a covenant of works, or a covenant of grace? Under a cloud of wrath, or a banner of love? In a ſpecial manner, there are two important queſtions that every communicant ſhould much think upon; *Whoſe am I?* and, *Whom ſerve I?* Happy is the man that can anſwer both theſe queſtions with Paul, Acts xxvii. 23. "It is God whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve." It is not the devil, it is not the world, it is not my luſts: but God, whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve. Surely Paul, in this condition, tho' a poor deſpiſed priſoner, was happier than Cæſar himſelf, to whoſe bar he was then going. Alas, it is to be feared

feared, there are many communicants, if they would anſwer the foreſaid queſtions truly, might ſay. It is not God, but the devil, or the world, or fleſhly luſts, whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve. "Oh, Lord, pity ſuch, and open their eyes to ſee what woful maſters and bad ſervice they are engaged unto, and deliver them ſpeedily from their bondage."

Look then to yourſelves, examine your ſtate, and ſee if you be among thoſe who have a right to this ſacred meal. Have you theſe characters?

I. Are you prieſts to God? Under the law, it was not lawful for any to eat of the ſhew-bread but the prieſts, Mark ii 26. ſo, under the goſpel, none have a right to eat of this conſecrated bread but thoſe who pertain to the ſpiritual prieſthood. Try then if ye be prieſts to God, 1. Are you ſet apart and dedicated to God, by your own conſent and voluntary reſignation? 2. Are you related to the great high prieſt of the church, Jeſus Chriſt, and do you pertain to his family? 3. Are you conſecrated to God, being waſhed in Chriſt's blood? Rev. i. 5. 6. "He hath loved us and waſhed us in his blood, and he hath made us prieſts unto God." 4. Do you offer up to God the ſpiritual ſacrifices of prayer and praiſes? Heb. xiii. 15. 5 Do you preſent the ſacrifice of Chriſt's blood and merits, in the hand of faith, to divine juſtice, whenever you find yourſelves accuſed by the law, or challenged by conſcience? well then, if you have theſe marks of prieſts, it is lawful for you to come and eat of this holy ſhew-bread.

II. Are you members of God's family and houſhold? then have you a right to this precious food: For Chriſt's fleſh and blood in the ſacrament is the food that God provides for thoſe of his own houſhold; not for ſtrangers or foreigners, not for dogs or profane perſons, Mat. xv. 26. "It is not meet (ſaith our Lord) to take the children's bread and caſt it to dogs." Are you children of the family? then may you eat of the houſhold proviſion. But ah, may ſome ſay, how ſhall we be numbered among the children? Have ye faith in a Redeemer? then are ye among the children, Gal. iii. 26. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus." Are

ye

ı in his houſe? Is there a ſaving change wrought
ɔu? Have you the natures of children? Are ye
of Chriſt, and ſincere well wiſhers to him, his
and intereſt in the world? then you have a right
:hildrens bread.

Obſerve the characters of thoſe who were admit-
:at of the paſſover in Ezra's time, Ezra. vi. 21.
the children of Iſrael who were come again out
ivity, and all ſuch as had ſeparated themſelves
ıe filthineſs of the heathen of the land, to ſeek
rd God of Iſrael, did eat." Now, there are three
:ers of theſe ancient partakers mentioned:

hey were ſuch of the Iſraelites *as were come out*
vity; for, while they were captives in Babylon,
d not eat the paſſover. Well, try yourſelves if
among Chriſt's ranſomed captives, delivered
ıe bondage of ſatan, the reigning power of ſin,
ptivity of your luſts.

hey were ſuch *as had ſeparated themſelves from*
bineſs of the heathen. viz. Swearing, whoring,
ineſs, profanation of the Lord's day, &c. theſe
are the filthineſs of the heathens. Examine, if
ſeparated from all theſe abominations, not only
he practice, but even from the love of them.

hey were ſuch as deſigned ſincerely to ſeek the
ɔod of Iſrael. Well, can you ſay it is the great
your ſoul, in approaching to the Lord's table, to
e Lord and Maſter of the feaſt; it is not the
d ordinance, but a gracious meeting with the
ordinances, that your ſouls thirſt for. Then
ay come and eat of the goſpel-paſſover.

heſe, and ſuch like characters, let communicants
ıe what ſtate they are in, before they adventure
holy table. This is a feaſt for Chriſt's friends
of, Cant. v. 1. And if enemies thruſt themſelves
ng them, it is at their higheſt peril. This ordi-
ſuppoſes you to be within that covenant which it
:al; for thoſe who are out of the covenant have
g to do with the ſeals of it. It ſuppoſes you to
ımething of that ſpiritual life which it doth ſuſtain

and nouriſh; ſo that thoſe who are dead in ſin have no right to meddle with it. Uncircumciſed perſons were not to eat of the paſſover; ſo neither are unrenewed perſons to eat of the Lord's ſupper. You muſt be born before you can eat; you muſt be united to Chriſt before you can feed on him; you cannot receive juice or ſap from the vine except you are a branch in it. It very much concerns you then at ſuch a time to enquire narrowly into the ſtate of your ſouls; and, in order to attain a true diſcovery thereof, you ought to put plain and particular queſtions to yourſelves, and charge your conſciences, as in the preſence of God, to give free and ingenuous anſwers thereto. And, for inſtance, ſee what anſwers you can give to theſe queſtions following.

Queſt. 1. "Have I never been ſpiritually enlightened," and got my eyes opened to ſee the depravation of my nature, and the ſinfulneſs of my heart and life, and that I am all as an unclean thing before God?

Queſt. 2. "Have I been truly convinced and made ſenſible of the exceeding evil that is in ſin?" Is my heart touched with a deep remorſe for it, and brought to lothe it, and willingly to forſake every known ſin? Was I ever brought the length, even to be willing to be looſed from this body of fleſh, that I may be freed from the body of ſin?

Queſt. 3. "Have I been brought to ſee my abſolute need of Chriſt" to ſave me from ſin and wrath, to bring me unto God, and to give me grace and glory? Have I ſeen ſuch beauty, and taſted ſuch ſweetneſs in Chriſt, that he is truly precious to me, and altogether lovely in my eſteem, ſo that I would willingly part with all things for him.

Queſt. 4. "Have I a covenant-relation to and intereſt in God, as mine?" Have I made choice of him as my God and portion, and have I reſigned and given up myſelf to him? Can I ſay, I am thine, Lord, and all I have, both body and ſoul? Are my eyes the Lord's to behold his wondrous works? Are my ears his, to hear his heavenly word? Are my taſte and ſmell his, to relish

his

his ſurpaſſing ſweetneſs in the creatures? Is my tongue his, to proclaim and triumph in his praiſe? Are my hands his, to work what is good, and to help his people? Are my feet his, to walk in his ways? Is my underſtanding his, to know his will, and contemplate his perfections? Is my memory his, to treaſure up his counſels and promiſes? Is my conſcience his, for a deputy to accuſe or excuſe under him? Is my will his, to chuſe or refuſe according to his pleaſure? Is my grief his, to mourn for what is offenſive to him? Is my hatred his, to abhor and flee from what is hateful to him? Are my deſires his, to long and pant for his preſence? My love his, to embrace him? My delight his, to acquieſce fully and contentedly in him?

Queſt. 5. "Is ſin in ſome meaſure mortified in me?" Do I find it weaker, or have I more ſtrength to reſiſt it than formerly? Is it now my grief and burden to find it moving and ſtirring in my heart?

Queſt. 6. "Doth the intereſt of God my Creator and Redeemer prevail in my heart" above the intereſt of the world, or of the fleſh? Do I ſeek chiefly, and above all things, the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs? Do I prefer Jeruſalem above my chief joy?

Now, if you thus examine yourſelves, and commune with your own hearts in ſecret, you may, by the bleſſing of God, come to find out the truth concerning your ſpiritual ſtate and condition.

Object. "But may we not miſtake in examining our ſtate? Do not we ſee the moſt part of men preſuming that their ſtate is ſafe and good, and having little doubt of their right to the childrens bread?"

Anſ. 1*ſt*, There are many, we need make no great queſtion anent their ſtate; ſuch as the groſsly ignorant, who know not the miſery of a natural ſtate, nor their need of Chriſt; and the openly profane, who go in the broad way of ſwearing, lying, drunkenneſs, neglect of prayer, &c. He that runs may read their character, that they are Chriſtleſs and unconverted: Whoever they be that are in this ſtate, and go in it, they are unfit for

this ordinance, they are not invited guests, they have no part nor lot in this matter. Ignorant persons cannot examine themselves, nor discern the Lord's body; profane persons mock God, when they pretend to seal a covenant with him: And, if they thrust themselves upon this table, they affront Christ, and seal their own condemnation. We would reckon it a loathsome sight to see some dead corpse, or men full of plague-sores, sit down beside us at our tables: And, do you think that the living and holy God can look with pleasure upon dead sinners, or those with the running ulcers of swearing, drunkenness, &c. sitting at his holy table? Let all such stand off; for they will find poison in the bread, and death in the cup, and go away worse than they came. This is not a converting but a confirming ordinance in its own nature, and therefore doth suppose that they are converted, and in Christ, who come to it.

2. There are others who come the length of a form and profession of religion, that yet are in a bad state; and, if they would allow themselves the free use of their reason, and compare their case with the word, they might easily perceive the badness of their condition. Upon a small search they might discover, that though they perform some duties, yet it is not for the glory of God, but to be seen of men, or to satisfy a natural conscience; they rest upon their duties, and make a saviour of them: And though they read, hear, or pray, yet they never notice heart-work; they love the world more than God, and mind the things of the flesh more than the things of the spirit; they are careless about secret prayers, and allow themselves in known sin; they suffer pride, covetousness, malice, revenge, and other lusts to reign in their hearts, without resisting them, or mourning for them: And surely these are black marks of a Christless state. And if ye would set up a tribunal in your own breasts, and hear what God's word and your own consciences would conclude concerning your condition, ye would find yourselves ranked among the unclean, and such as have no right to the childrens bread, while you remain in your present state: But alas, how many such do rush upon this solemn ordinance, without any heart-search,

heart-ſearch, or acquaintance with themſelves! They truſt to their outward form, and hence flatter themſelves that they are ſafe enough; and ſo, like the *fooliſh virgins*, they ſlumber away their time, ſtill dreaming of heaven and happineſs; and nothing that God's word or miniſters do ſay will undeceive them, till the *cry at midnight* awakes them; and behold, then, when they open their eyes, they meet with an eternal diſappointment: When they thought on nothing but open gates at the firſt knock, behold, the draw-bridge of mercy is taken up, and the gates of heaven ſhut in, and they hear nothing but that terrible voice, "depart from me, I know you not." O that he who ſearcheth Jeruſalem with candles, and knows the heart, would undeceive you and awaken you in time!

3. There are others who are really in a good ſtate, though the evidences of it are not ſo clear to them: Satan raiſes many fogs and miſts to obſcure the ſight of grace, and the ſaving change that the ſpirit of God hath wrought in their ſouls. Beſides what I have formerly ſaid, I ſhall add theſe few remarks or queſtions more whereby you may decern it:

1. "Have you got new diſcoveries of things which ye had not before?" Though perhaps ye cannot tell exactly the time, manner and ſteps of the change; yet can ye ſay, with the *blind man*, John ix. 25. "One thing I know, that whereas once I was blind, now I ſee." "Once I ſaw little evil in ſin, but now I ſee it exceeding vile and damnable: Once I thought there was ſome good thing in me, but now I ſee my heart is deceitful and deſperately wicked, and ſwarming full of baſe luſts: Once I ſlighted heart-holineſs, but now I ſee it to be moſt beautiful and neceſſary: Once I ſaw little need of Chriſt, but now I ſee he is more neceſſary to my ſoul, than meat and drink to my body: Once I ſaw little beauty in Chriſt, but now I ſee him to be the chiefeſt among ten thouſand, nay, among all the thouſands in the world." Then to be ſure there is a change wrought; though ye were once darkneſs, yet now are ye light in the Lord.

2. "What are theſe things you are moſt taken up and

and concerned about?" Can you ſay, once it was my queſtion, "What ſhall I eat, what ſhall I drink, and wherewithal ſhall I be clothed?" But now my great queſtion is, "What ſhall I do to be ſaved?" Once my main care was to ſecure and increaſe my temporal enjoyments; but now it is to lay up my treaſure in heaven, and clear up the evidences for it: Once the world and temporal things were my uptaking buſineſs; but now my Saviour, my ſoul, and eternity, are my chief concerns, and ly neareſt to my heart.

3. How ſtand your hearts towards ſecret and ſpiritual duties, and towards ſecret and ſpiritual ſins? 1. As for the firſt, Do you earneſtly deſire and ſtudy patience under affliction, meekneſs under injuries, and contentment with your lot and condition? Do you ſtudy humility and lowlineſs of mind, and deſire to have pride brought down, that you may be ſtill lower in your own eyes? Are ye delighted with ſecret mourning for ſin? Are ye deſirous of intimate converſe with God by ſecret prayer and meditation? Wherever grace is wrought in the heart, it bends towards God, and centers in him. It is the voice and very firſt cry of the new creature in the ſoul, Pſal. lxxiii. 28. "It is good for me to draw nigh to God." *Nearneſs* to God is the mean of its livelihood and ſubſiſtence. This is given as the mark of Paul's change, Acts ix. 11. "Behold, he prayeth." The Spirit of grace is never a dumb Spirit, Zech. xii. 10. Gal. iv. 6. But, if thou art a ſtranger to converſe with God in ſecret duties, it is a ſad ſign of thy eſtrangement to a ſaving change upon thy ſoul.

4. How ſtand you affected to ſecret and ſpiritual ſins? Are you grieved for your pride and ambition, envy, unbelief, atheiſtical thoughts, backwardneſs to duty? &c. Do ye feel the ſtirrings of indwelling corruption and heart luſts, and earneſtly ſtrive againſt them? Doth the eye of God, or the love of Chriſt, reſtrain you as much from ſecret ſins, as from open tranſgreſſions? Do you abhor the temptations to ſin, and ſtart at the firſt appearance thereof, like Joſeph, Gen. xxvi. "How can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God.

Object.

Object. "Alas, I am a poor, dark, confuſed creature, I know not what to make of my caſe; I would ſometimes fain lay claim to ſome of the foreſaid marks, but preſently I am beat off, and all is darkened to me: For, when I begin to conſider narrowly, I cannot ſay that I have any true love to Chriſt, or that I ever rightly cloſed with him by faith; I know a little of a work of grace in my heart; I cannot take up the beauty of Chriſt and of holineſs."

Anſ. I pity thoſe poor, trembling, and doubting ſouls, who cannot attain to any light or clearneſs about their condition; who yet are labouring for it, and would give all the world to obtain it: And though, in the mean time, they dare not renounce all hope, yet they can ſee no ſolid ground to build upon, and are often tempted to give over all further endeavours.

To ſuch I would ſay, that you ought to wait on God, and hold on in the way of duty to your lives end, whatever diſcouragements you meet with therein, God in his own time will let you know that your labour is not in vain. In the mean time, for thy comfort, I would aſk thee ſome few queſtions;

1. Thou ſayeſt, thou haſt no love to Chriſt, nor haſt thou cloſed with him by faith. But, *is love to Chriſt* that which thou wouldſt faineſt have of any thing in the world? Is it thy greateſt grief, ſo that ſometimes it forceth tears from thine eyes, that thou canſt not get thy wretched heart to love him? Then, to be ſure, thou art not deſtitute of love to him. Haſt thou not ſo much love to him as makes every thing that bears his image amiable in thine eyes? You are feared you love him not; but, can you ſay there is nothing in all the world would pleaſe you ſo much as one ray or love-blink of his countenance? And tho' he ſhould never own you, yet you reſolve to lie all your days at his feet, and look up to him, and to none other, for ſalvation: Then, be of good cheer, poor ſoul, for theſe are comfortable degrees of faith and love.

2. What is the object in all the world that thy reſtleſs heart is moſt pointing out after? Canſt thou ſay, if thy heart deceive thee not, it is an *intereſt in Chriſt, communion*

mutch with God, and love to his ways; and obtaining of theſe would yield thee more content than all the gold of Ophir? Then, to be ſure, there is true grace wrought in thee. There are many true diamonds that are but like ſparks in reſpect of bigger ſtones, yet theſe are as true as the other. Every degree of peace is grace; and ſincere deſires after grace, are certainly true grace.

3 Upon what is it that you ſpend the ſtrength of your prayers, and what are you moſt earneſt for? Is it, O doubting ſoul, for the death of ſin, the removal of heart-plagues, the curing of heart-wandering, heart-deadneſs, and backwardneſs to duty? Again, doſt thou ſpend another great part of thy prayers for the increaſe and lively exerciſe of grace, and for the actings of faith and love? Then this is a ſure mark of the Spirit's work in thy ſoul; for, if thou ſaw not the evil of ſin and beauty of grace, thou wouldſt not ſpend the ſtrength of thy prayers for killing ſin, and quickning grace in thy ſoul.

But, laſtly, O doubting ſoul, if thou canſt not win to clearneſs, by poring on the marks of grace and faith, (as indeed ſometimes doubting believers cannot, ſince there is no mark that can be given, but a ſcrupulous conſcience will find a back-door) then try another way, endeavour to act faith in a direct manner upon Jeſus Chriſt; for many times a believer will ſooner come to a clearneſs of his intereſt, by the direct acts of faith, than by the reflex acts. Therefore, if thou canſt not ſee faith in thy ſoul, then preſently flee to Chriſt, and lay hold upon the offer and promiſe of life, as if thou hadſt never done it before. Run as a malefactor to the city of refuge for protection, as if you had never fled there before: Go as a wounded man to the phyſician for a plaiſter to thy wounds, as if you had never got one applied before. Go tranſact and covenant with God in Chriſt, as if you had never eſſayed any thing like it before; for whatever you have been, Chriſt ſtill tenders himſelf to you to be your Saviour, and you cannot poſſibly be ſo willing to accept of him as he is to accept of you. Try this method, and there is good ground to hope, that light will break up, and fears evaniſh;

niſh; and ſo you may with comfort come to this ſealing ordinance.

II. *Of the Examination of our Sins.*

Examine yourſelves of your ſins and ſhort-comings; take an account of your debts, and ſee how great they are: Put the queſtion to yourſelves, which the unjuſt ſteward put to his Lord's debtors, *How much oweſt thou to my Lord?* And ſee that ye tell the truth, and do not for a *hundred* write down *fifty*, as many a falſe conſcience doth: But deal truly and ingenuouſly, for an all-ſeeing God is looking on. Do as the Jews, who, before the celebration of the paſſover, ſearched their houſes for leaven very narrowly; they lighted candles, and ſought every corner and hole therein; and, when they found it, they threw it away with deteſtation. Some think it is with alluſion to this cuſtom, that the Lord is ſaid "to ſearch Jeruſalem with candles," Zeph. i. 12. In like manner, you muſt narrowly ſearch every corner of your hearts for the "leaven of pride, avarice, malice, and hypocriſy," 1 Cor. v. 7. 8. The iniquities of wicked men will find them out, but good men will find out their iniquities. Now, if ye will find them out, ye muſt ſet time apart, and convene your ſouls before God and conſcience, and compare your hearts and lives with God's word, and the rule of his commandments. Look back upon your actions, recal the paſſages of your lives, and remember your faults before the Lord. If you would have your repentance full, ye muſt endeavour to take a full and particular view of your ſins, both original and actual, of omiſſion and commiſſion, of youth and riper age, of purpoſe and of practice, of heart and of life. View your ſins both ſecret and open, againſt the firſt and ſecond table; conſider how ye have wronged God, your neighbour, and yourſelves; how ye have tranſgreſſed every commandment, either in thoughts, words, or deeds: Think upon the luſts of your hearts, the ſins of your tongues, and outbreakings of your lives. Particularly, ſearch out your predominent and beloved ſins, and alſo the heinous circumſtances and aggrava-

tions of your ſins; and forget not to examine yourſelves concerning the breach of former vows, and the guilt contracted ſince the laſt ſacrament. Let no wound or ſore be concealed or ſkinned over, but ſearch them all to the bottom, if you would have them perfectly cured. Let it not ſatisfy you to aſk conſcience in an overly way, concerning the foreſaid ſins, but wait for an anſwer, nay, urge it to give it, and put it hard to it.

III. *Of the Examination of our Wants.*

Examine your wants and neceſſities, and come ſenſible of them to this ordinance, where ye may find all needful ſupplies treaſured up in Chriſt's fulneſs, which is here exhibited; ſearch out your defects and needs, and come to Chriſt with them. Are you polluted, heavy loaden, and under bonds and terror? Do you ſee yourſelves blind, naked, lame, ſick, or wounded? Come ſenſible of thy miſeries, O ſinner, to Chriſt, who has a broad plaiſter for every ſore. Doſt thou find thy graces weak? Doth thy faith ſhake, thy hope ſtagger, thy love decline, thy holy deſires abate? Doſt thou want wiſdom, ſincerity, ſelf-denial, meekneſs, humility, or brokenneſs of heart? Then come ſenſible of theſe defects to Chriſt for new ſupplies and reinforcements. Do you want a ſight of your intereſt in Chriſt, a ſeal of your pardon, clear and unclouded evidences of grace, a view of the King's face, or ſtrength to vanquiſh your luſts? Nay, are you tryſted with bodily wants and infirmities, croſſes and loſſes, and many outward preſſures and afflictions? Then come with a due ſenſe of all theſe wants and burdens upon your ſpirits to Jeſus Chriſt, and caſt them all upon him. In this ordinance, Chriſt ſets himſelf upon a throne of grace, with a ſceptre of mercy in his hand, and waits to hear his people's complaints and petitions. A feaſting time is a time of granting requeſts; ſee then that you be ready to preſent your's at this feaſt. Chriſt here ſaith to thee, as the King did to Eſther at the banquet of wine, Eſther v. "What is thy petition? and what is thy requeſt? and it ſhall be granted thee." Or, as he ſaid unto the blind men, Matt. xx.

xx. 32. " What will ye that I ſhall do unto you ?" Be ready with them to anſwer, " Lord, that our eyes may be opened ; or, Lord, that our hearts may be ſoftened ; Lord, that ſuch a weak grace may be cheriſhed, that ſuch a ſtrong luſt may be vanquiſhed, that ſuch a plague may be removed, &c.

IV. *Of the Examination of our Ends.*

Examine your ends and deſigns in approaching to the Lord's table. Chriſt examines the peoples ends in going to hear John, Matt. xi 7. " What went you out for to ſee ?" Much more ought we to examine our ends in going to the Lord's table See that it be not to obſerve the faſhion of the country where you live, or to get a name, and be the better thought of by miniſters, friends, or neighbours, or to make atonement for your ſins, as ſome ignorant perſons among us do apprehend, who reſt upon the bare ordinance, and outward ſigns and elements, for pardon and juſtification, without looking to Chriſt for it : Thus, alas, many content themſelves with Elijah's mantle, without aſking for the God of Elijah ; give them the ſhell, they aſk not for the kernel : Let them have their communion (as they call it) though it really be nothing but a bit of bread and a ſip of wine, they think all is well, their ſins are pardoned, they are ſure of heaven, they are ready to die, the devil can have no power over them ; and ſo they uſe this ſacrament as a charm, being ignorant of the true ends and uſes of it.

Queſt. " What are theſe ends and deſigns we ought to have in our approaches to this ſacred table ?"

Anſ. It is of great conſequence to be well inſtructed hereof, and to try ourſelves diligently concerning them. Examine then,

(1.) If it be your deſign ſincerely to give obedience to our Lord and Saviour's call. Can ye ſay, that his authority hath a powerful influence upon you in this matter, and ye dare not ſlight it, and that ye cannot think of neglecting Chriſt's dying charge, and the command

he hath left behind him to his diſciples, to ſolemnize and celebrate the memorial of his dying love?

(2.) Is it your deſign *to ſhew forth Chriſt's death?* This ſhould be your great buſineſs in this ordinance, 1 Cor xi. 25. 26. You are to ſhew forth and annunciate Chriſt's death three ways:

1. With reſpect to yourſelves, you are by this ſacrament to give a lively repreſentation to your mind of Chriſt's death, and keep up a freſh remembrance of his ſufferings and dying love, and of the great propitiatory ſacrifice he offered for you upon the croſs, and the great things he hath thereby purchaſed for you; and hereby you are to raiſe your faith and hope in a crucified Saviour.

2. With reſpect to the world, you are hereby to teſtify your reſpect to a crucified Chriſt, and that ye publicly own yourſelves to be his diſciples; and are not aſhamed of a crucified Jeſus, or his ignominious death, but glory in it, as the wiſdom of God, and power of God; and count it your honour to be his followers. As alſo, ye declare that ye look to his death and merits as the only hope of your ſalvation, and reject all other ſaviours beſides him.

3. With reſpect to God, and that two ways: 1. Shew forth Chriſt's death to a juſt and ſin revenging God, in a way of faith and prayer: Preſent and plead this ſacrifice as a ſcreen and defence againſt the ſword of juſtice, the wrath of God, and curſe of the law; plead it as the ground of all your hopes and deſires. 2. Shew it forth to a good God, in a way of thankſgiving and praiſe. Praiſe God for ſuch a glorious Redeemer, and ſuch an excellent ſacrifice; bleſs him that ſent him, and bleſs him that came. Thankſgiving to God is a ſpecial deſign of this ordinance, and upon this account it is called the Euchariſt, or thankſgiving. Here it is we ſhould celebrate the praiſes of our Redeemer, who came from a throne to a dunghill, yea, from the height of glory to the depth of miſery, to ſave us from periſhing eternally.

(3.) Is it your deſign to make a full and covenant with God in Chriſt, make your ſolemn vows, and ſolemnly bind yourſelves to be the Lord's people? As believers

lievers here come to get God's ſeals of his covenant, for confirming their right to the benefits of it; ſo alſo they are to ſeal their covenant engagements, to take God for their God, accept of Chriſt for their prince and Saviour, give up themſelves to him, renounce ſin and walk in the ways of goſpel-obedience. Now, becauſe many profeſs to covenant with God in this ordinance, who yet deal falſly with him, you ought to be at great pains to try the ſincerity of your hearts in this matter. And, for trial of it, ſee if you can ſay, that your wicked hearts are a greater burden to you than all the croſſes and troubles you meet with in the world; and that you are more deſirous to be rid of ſin and heart-plagues, than of any affliction whatſoever. Or, can you ſay that you deſire heart-holineſs, and further degrees of grace, of faith, love and brokenneſs of heart for ſin, more than any honours, profits or pleaſures this world can afford? Or, can ye ſay, that the world's beſt things are in your eyes, as dung or nothing, in compariſon of Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, and an intereſt ſecured therein? And, can ye ſay that ye are ſenſible of your own inſufficiency and weakneſs to make or keep any covenant with God; and therefore ye are made to renounce all confidence in yourſelves, and to ſay, "In the Lord only I have righteouſneſs and ſtrength?" Then theſe are good ſigns that you are honeſt and ſincere in the making of this bargain and are likely to be found ſtedfaſt in God's covenant.

(4.) Is it your deſign to draw near to God, and hold intimate communion and fellowſhip with Chriſt in this ordinance? And do you earneſtly deſire that "ye may ſup with him and he with you?" This table is inſtituted for the kindly correſpondence of Chriſt and his people, and their mutual feaſting one with another: For, as Chriſt here ſets before you the *dainties and comforts of heaven*, and invites you to feaſt thereon; ſo you are to ſet your graces and affections before him, and invite him to come into his garden and eat his pleaſant fruits. You are to come here, not only to receive the tokens of Chriſt's love to you, but alſo to give the expreſſions of your love to him. Here there is a mutual communication of ſecrets betwixt Chriſt and his people.

(5.)

(5.) Is it your deſire to get your manifold wants ſupplied out of Chriſts fulneſs? Is it your earneſt deſire that his ordinance may be an effectual mean, through the bleſſing of God, for the weakening and killing of your ſins and luſts, the nouriſhing and ſtrengthening of your ſouls, the curing of your diſeaſes and plagues, the increaſe and exerciſe of your graces; particularly for ſtrengthening faith, inflaming your love, kindling your deſires, quickening your hope, and renewing your repentance and reſolutions againſt ſin.

Again, is it your deſign to get clearer evidences of your intereſt in Chriſt, the ſmiles of his face, and comforts of his ſpirit? Would ye have a ſeal of your pardon, a diſplay of the riches of free grace, a ſight of the "Sun of righteouſneſs, the love of God ſhed abroad in your hearts," and all your fears removed? Would ye have at this feaſt furniture for your ſpiritual journey, ſupport under affliction, ſtrength againſt temptations, and preparation for ſuffering? Would ye have a pledge and foretaſte of heaven, and the eternal communion that is above? Then theſe are good deſigns; and, if you be ſincere in them, you may expect a welcome from the maſter of the feaſt.

V. *Of the Examination of our Graces.*

A fifth thing you muſt examine yourſelves of, in order to prepare you for this holy table, is your graces and qualifications. Search diligently if you have theſe ſacramental graces requiſite in worthy communicants; ſuch as knowledge, faith, repentance, hungring deſires, and new obedience.

I. We muſt examine our knowledge, and ſee if we have a competent underſtanding of the principles and grounds of Chriſtianity, and of the nature, ſignification and uſe of the Lord's ſupper. Without this, we cannot know God nor ourſelves; we can neither know God's infinite juſtice and purity, our own natural corruption and miſery, nor Jeſus Chriſt our great help and remedy, the knowledge whereof is abſolutely neceſſary to worthy communicating. In ſome churches, in ancient times, infants and children were admitted to the Lord's ſupper,

and

and the Greek and Armenian churches do the ſame at this day: But we juſtly diſſent from them in this practice, becauſe it is neceſſary, in order to our being fit and worthy partakers, that we *examine ourſelves*, and *diſcern the Lord's body* in the ſacrament, according to 1 Cor. xi. 28. 29. neither of which can be done by thoſe that are not come to the years of underſtanding and diſcerning.

A man without knowledge is not in covenant with God, and therefore hath no right to partake of the ſeals of the covenant, Heb. viii. 10. 11. "This is the covenant I will make, &c. all ſhall know me from the leaſt to the greateſt." So that theſe who know not God have no intereſt in this covenant, and conſequently can have no title to his benefits, nor any gracious communion with God. Obſerve how the promiſe runs, Jer. xxiv. 7. "I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they ſhall be my people, and I will be their God."

It is threatened as a heavy judgement, for perſons to die without knowledge, Job xxxvi. 12. "They ſhall die without knowledge;" It is as much as if it were threatened, they ſhall die in their ſins, and periſh for ever. Now, if it be a ſad caſe to die without knowledge, ſo is it to come to the ſacrament without knowledge; for that which makes a man unfit to die, makes him alſo unfit to communicate. No man is ſafe to partake in that caſe, which he is not in ſafety to die in.

Neither children nor fools are fit to receive the Lord's ſupper, becauſe they are not capable to examine themſelves and diſcern the Lord's body. Now, ignorant perſons, in God's account, are both children and fools: ſo he reckons them, Jer. iv. 22. "For my people is fooliſh, they have not known me, they are ſottiſh children, they have no underſtanding."

Under the law it was reckoned an abomination to offer that which was blind unto the Lord, Levit. xxii. 22. Now, a blind offerer, that hath the eyes of his underſtanding darkened, is more abominable than a blind offering.

Error or ignorance makes a man morally unclean before God. When the leproſy affected the head, then the

the prieſt was ordered to pronounce the man utterly unclean, and exclude him from the camp of Iſrael; why? becauſe "the plague was in his head," Levit. xiii. 44. Every ignorant man has a plague in his head, a plague of ſpiritual blindneſs and darkneſs, beſides many worſe plagues in his heart; for without knowledge *the mind is not good;* (whatever ignorant folk ſpeak of their good hearts, and good meanings) it is full of earthlineſs, enmity and backwardneſs to what is good, Prov. xix. 2. 1. Pet. i. 14. Surely then ſuch unclean perſons are not fit to come to the holy table of the Lord. It concerns us then to examine our knowledge before we approach. As for the objects, properties and uſefulneſs of this knowledge, I refer the reader to *Sacram. Cat. (firſt Edit.)* p. 165, &c.

II. Examine your faith, before you approach to the Lord's table; for faith is abſolutely neceſſary here. *Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God* in any duty, and far leſs in this, where faith is highly needful, and ſo much to be employed. He that would receive Jeſus Chriſt in the ſacrament, muſt have an *eye* to ſee Chriſt and his worth, a *foot* to come to Chriſt, a *hand* to lay hold on Chriſt, and a *mouth* to feed on him; all theſe are neceſſary in order to partake of Chriſt at the Lord's ſupper. Now, *faith* is all theſe to the believing communicant. 1. It is the *eye* of the ſoul, by which it ſees Chriſt, Iſa. xlv. 22. "look unto me and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth." 2. "It is the *foot* whereby we come unto Chriſt," John vi. 35. "He that cometh unto me ſhall never hunger, and he that believeth on me ſhall never thirſt." 3. "It is the *hand* whereby we receive and lay hold on Chriſt," John i. 12. "To as many as received him he gave power to become the ſons of God, even to them that believe on his name." 4. "It is the *mouth* whereby we feed on Chriſt," John vi. 35. "Except ye eat the fleſh and drink the blood of the Son of God, ye have no life in you." i. e. except ye believe on Chriſt. Now, what can you do at the Lord's table without faith? Can a man ſee without an *eye*, come without a *foot*, receive without a *hand*, and feed without a *mouth*?

Moreover,

Moreover, without faith you can have no right to this holy table, for it is childrens bread; and it is by faith you become children Without it you cannot enter into covenant with God; for faith is the very aſſent and conſent of the ſoul unto the marriage-covenant which is tranſacted and ſealed in the Lord's ſupper.

Without faith you can have no communion with God in this or any ordinance; God will ſurely hide his face from them that come without it, Deut, xxxii. 20. "And he ſaid, I will hide my face from them:" and the reaſon he gives for it, is, "for they are children in whom is no faith." So that without faith you can't ſee God in the ſacrament; for, how can a man ſee a veiled or hidden face? Unbelief cuts a man off from God, Rom. xi. 20. "Becauſe of unbelief they were broke off". And, how can a man, cut off from God, have any communion with God?

Without faith you can derive no virtue from Chriſt, nor benefit from this ordinance: For as a rich jewel can do you no good unleſs it be accepted, nor a ſovereign medicine unleſs it be applied, nor a deep well without a bucket to draw with; ſo neither will Chriſt's ſhed blood or purchaſed ſalvation avail you, unleſs you bring faith to apply it to your ſouls. *The well is deep*, ſaid the woman to Chriſt, *and thou haſt nothing to draw with*. So may I ſay to thee, if faith be wanting. Moſes ſaith to God's kindneſs to Iſrael, Deut xxxii. 13. "He made him to ſuck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock." Now Chriſt is a rock that yields all manner of neceſſaries to believers, honey and oil, ſweetneſs and fatneſs, quickning and comfort. But, how do they come by it from this rock: It is ſaid, "He made him ſuck honey out of the rock:" There is no honey or oil to be had without ſucking, and there is no ſucking without the mouth of faith. He that hath faith can ſuck this honey and oil from Chriſt in the ſacrament; but he that wants it can ſuck nothing: Unbelievers then muſt have a dry ſacrament of it: for they cannot ſuck, though the breaſts be full Nay, which is worſe, unbelief lays reſtraints on the virtue and healing power of Chriſt in the ſacrament: For we are told,

Mark vi. 5. 6. "He could there (i. e.) in his own country) do no mighty work becauſe of their unbelief. Why? Could any thing bind our Redeemer's hands, or limit his mighty power? No; but he lays down this order of working which he will not alter, to "put forth his mighty power in and unto theſe that believe," Eph. i. 19. So that unbelief doth enervate the force and operation of the ſacrament.

Without faith you can never prepare for this ordinance, nor partake of it's virtue. Without faith you cannot put on the wedding-garment, you cannot diſcern Chriſt through the elements, you cannot feel the print of the nails, you cannot flee to the city of refuge, you cannot take hold of the horns of the altar, nor grip to the plank of mercy to ſave thy periſhing ſoul. And, what good can you get at the ſacrament if you do none of theſe? Precious faith is the wing whereby the poor trembling dove doth fly to the window opened in the ſide of the ark; it is by this that it doth take ſhelter in the clifts of the rock. In a word, faith is the grace that puts life and vigour in a dead ſoul, it is the ſpring and *primum mobile* of all the other graces; it doth ſet repentance, love, deſire, and all the reſt on works: So that a man can do nothing at the Lord's table without faith, except it be to wound Chriſt, and bring wrath on himſelf.

You ſee then what need you have of faith at this ordinance, and to examine if it be true and not counterfeit. As Philip examined the Eunuch of his faith before he admitted him to the ſacrament of baptiſm, Acts viii. 37. "Believeſt thou with all thine heart?" So ſhould every man examine himſelf before the Lord's ſupper; *Do I believe with all mine heart?* Do I eſteem Chriſt moſt precious? Doth my heart bleed for piercing him? Do I embrace him in all his offices, and ſay, He is all my ſalvation and all my deſire? Well, if thou canſt truly ſay ſo, thy faith will make thee whole, and thou mayſt expect a kind welcome at thy Saviour's table. The Lord has furniſhed you with abundance of marks in his word, for the trial of your faith. See *Sacram. Cat. (firſt Edit.)* p. 172. &c. Try your faith now; for

you

you know not but your faith may come to a firey trial, as did the martyrs faith of old: And, how will you be able to abide such a trial as that, if you never put it to a previous private trial? "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, how wilt thou contend with horses?" How wilt thou abide a firey trial, that cannot endure a closet-trial? Men will not buy oxen for plowing, but they are desirous to put them to trial, Luke xiv. 19. "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them;" and, will communicants pretend to such precious jewels as faith, love, &c. and yet not desire to prove them, and especially at a time when it is so highly requisite, and so very much depends on the doing of it?

III. Try your repentance before you partake: For, without a *broken heart*, you cannot expect to meet with a *broken Christ* in the sacrament, but a *broken and a contrite heart is a sacrifice he will not despise.* You must *sow in tears*, if you would *reap in joy*: for a wet seed-time doth here prognosticate a sun-shiny and plentiful harvest. It was of water that Christ made the choicest of wine at the marriage-feast in Cana of Galilee; so the water of true repentance will produce the choicest wine of consolation in the sacrament. When Joseph's brethren came to be sensible of their sin in selling him, then it was, and not till then, that he made them a feast, and kindly entertained them at his table: So till such time as we be sensible of our sins, and repent for piercing our Redeemer, he will not feast us, nor smile upon us at his table.

Now, because there is much counterfeit repentance in the world, go retire in secret, and put questions to yourselves concerning your repentance: Say, "Am I a penitent in heart, and a secret mourner for sin, when no eyes see me but God's? Do I mourn for inward and secret sins, as well as for outward and open sins? Do I mourn for the dishonours done to God by the sins of others, as well as by my own? Am I troubled more for the evil of sin, than for the evil of affliction? Am I more grieved for abusing the mercy and goodness of God, than for exposing myself to the sword of his justice? Do I cry with the penitent prodigal in my confessions

confeſſions, as in Luke xv. 18. "Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee?" Alas, I have wronged a kind and loving father, whoſe goodneſs towards me hath been as the dropping dew: Ah, I have pierced my compaſſionate Redeemer, and crucified him over again by my ſins; and, what do I deſerve at his hands?"

Again, What are the effects and fruits of your repentance? Doth it beget in you a vehement hatred and indignation againſt ſin, and a watchfulneſs to prevent it. Wherever there is true repentance, there will be a hearty averſion to ſin. As *a burnt child will dread the fire*, ſo a Chriſtian, who hath truly repented of ſin, is ſo ſenſible of the weight of ſin, and the wrath of God, that he is reſolved never more to touch theſe burning coals. David, who before his repentance had his conſcience ſo hardened, that he could even drink the blood of Uriah; yet, after his repentance, his conſcience was ſo tender, that he refuſed ſo much as to drink of that water which had been but the occaſion of hazarding mens lives.

And, *laſtly*, Doth thy repentance work in thee a holy revenge againſt ſin? Doſt thou look upon it as the enemy of God, the murderer of Chriſt, and deſtroyer of thy ſoul?, and, upon that account, that it doth not deſerve to live? It was Eſau's expreſſion, Gen. xxvii. 41. "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; and then will I ſlay my brother Jacob." But ſay thou, O communicant, "The days of mourning for the death of my dear Saviour, and everlaſting Father, are come; and now will I ſlay my moſt beloved luſts, now will I be revenged on them for ſeeking to rob me of my ſpiritual birth-right, and wrong me of my eternal bleſſing, and, which is worſe, for actual crucifying of my glorious Redeemer. Shall ſin be ſuffered to live in my ſoul, that would not ſuffer my Saviour to live in the world? Away with it, away with it; crucify it, crucify it." By ſuch marks as theſe, try the ſincerity of your repentance.

As for the trial of your love, deſires, ſpiritual appetites, new obedience, and other graces, ſeeing I have no new thing here to add, I refer you to *Sacr. Cat.* (*laſt edit.*) pa. 193. &c.

Some

Some objections of doubting Chriſtians, relative to the former doctrine anſwered.

Object. I. " BY what I have heard (may ſome ſay) I fear I am not fit nor prepared for this ſolemn ordinance; and it being a thing ſo dangerous to come to it unpreparedly, I tremble and fear to go forward to that holy table "

Anſ. 1. Did you always keep the fear of God in your ſouls, preparation-work would be leſs painful, and an approach to God leſs frightful than now it is: For then you might go to the Lord's table with holy fear and reverence, and ſlavith fear would not ſo much haunt you. Did you keep more at a diſtance from ſin, and fear to do what God has forbidden, you would not ſo much fear to do what he hath commanded.

2*dly*, Though you be not ſo prepared for this ordinance as you deſire, yet if you ſincerely make conſcience of preparation-work, and do your utmoſt to get yourſelf ready, you ought to go forward in obedience to God's command, *Do this in remembrance of me.* I know there are not a few exerciſed Chriſtians brought to great ſtraits betwixt a ſenſe of their unfitneſs, and the obligation of God's command, ſo that they know not what to do; their fears and diſcouragements are ſo great, they are like to be overwhelmed with them. But let ſuch mind the word of the Lord to the children of Iſrael, when they were in great perplexity at the Red-ſea, and their hearts ſinking for fear, Exod. xiv. 15. " And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, Speak unto the children of Iſrael that they go forward." Forward, might they ſay, (and the deep ſea before us) as good go backward to the Egyptians, or ſtand ſtill and let them come up and put us to the ſword, as go forward into the ſea, and be drowned; ſurely, the deep ſea will have no mercy on us more than the Egyptians. But, for all this, *Speak to the children of Iſrael* (ſaith the Lord) *that they go forward.* Let them obey my commandment, and truſt me with their lives. Here is encouragement to the doubting believer, that in all ſincerity makes preparation for this ordinance, though he

he hath many doubts about his right to it, and great fears about the event of the duty: The Lord bids us ſpeak to ſuch a man, that he go forward; let him obey God's commandment, truſt God for his through-bearing and ſucceſs.

Object. II. "But (ſaith another) none ſhould come to this table, but they who are in a ſtate of grace; and I apprehend I have no grace, I cannot lay claim to any of the marks of grace before mentioned, and, particularly, I want faith in Jeſus Chriſt; and, how ſhall I go to the Lord's table?"

Anſ. There may be true grace and true faith in a ſoul, ſincere and acceptable before God, though yet the degrees of it may be ſo ſmall, and the operations of it ſo weak, that it can hardly be diſcerned by us. Now, though you cannot lay claim to the foregoing marks, yet ſee if you can at leaſt anſwer to the following queſtions:

1*ſt*, Do you not ſee yourſelf undone and loſt for ever without Chriſt, and that none but Chriſt can ſave you, and you never reſolve to look to any other?

2*dly*, Are you not grieved for the ſins that have undone you, and would as willingly be free of them, as ever a ſick man would be free of his ſickneſs, or a priſoner of his chains?

3*dly*, Do ye not conſcientiouſly practiſe whatever you are convinced to be your duty, and dare not omit it when you know it? Do ye not ſincerely aim at prayer, ſearching the ſcriptures, mourning, meditations, and other duties?

4*thly*, As you dare not omit theſe duties, can you ſay alſo, that you dare not reſt in them, nor rely on them, becauſe you ſee your prayers for pardon have need of pardon, and your tears for ſin have need themſelves of being waſhed in the blood of Chriſt?

5*thly*, Do you unfeignedly deſire Chriſt, and hunger and thirſt for him and for his righteouſneſs, as that which only can be ſufficient to cover the nakedneſs of your ſouls? Are you willing to accept of him on any terms, willing that he ſhould ſanctify as well as ſave you, bring you

you to obedience as well as to glory? Doth your judgement value Chriſt above all, and doth your will chuſe him before all things? If you doubt whether you love him, yet tell me whether you would love him if you could? If you doubt whether you have already received him, yet tell me whether you are unfeignedly willing to receive him? Then theſe are ſome degrees of grace, ſome workings of faith, well-pleaſing in God's ſight; and, do you cheriſh and improve them in the uſe of God's appointed means, they will increaſe.

Object. III. "But (ſaith one) we are required to draw near to God with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith; and how can I be accepted, who have a heart full of fears and doubts?"

Anſ. 1. The aſſurance of faith is indeed to be ſought and endeavoured by all in their approaches to God, but yet it is not the attainment of every believer in his approaches to God: For there are ſome who have come to him with much fear, and yet have gone away with much comfort, Mark v. 32. the woman that had the bloody iſſue came fearing and trembling, and fell down before Chriſt; and yet Chriſt ſaid to her, ver. 34. *Daughter, go in peace*: ſhe came to Chriſt in fear, and yet went away in peace

2. The beſt courſe we can take, under a burden of fears and perplexities, is to go with them to Jeſus Chriſt. for relief. David, when he was overwhelmed therewith, gets to the "Rock that was higher than he," Pſal. lxi. 2. and on this rock he lays all his burdens, and founds all his hopes. O believer, your rock Chriſt is higher than you, higher than all your enemies, higher than all your fears and temptations; he is ſufficiently able to overmatch them all. Get yourſelves to this ſtrong Rock, and ſhelter your ſouls in the cleſts thereof.

Object. IV. "But (ſaith another) I have little hope of meeting with Chriſt at his table; and what ſhould ſuch a hopeleſs creature do there?"

Anſ. 1*ſt.* It is indeed the duty of all believers to come to this ordinance with raiſed hopes and expectations of meeting

meeting with Chriſt; for ordinarily "his mercy is upon us according as we hope in him," Pſal. xxxiii. 22. Yet,

2*dly*, A believer may ſometimes meet with Chriſt, when he has leaſt hopes to find him. For Mary, when ſhe met with Chriſt, John xx 15. and ſuppoſed he had been the gardener, and had enquired of him as ſuch for Chriſt, ſhe had little hope; for, before he anſwered her, ſhe turned herſelf from him, and thought it wholly needleſs to ſtand talking with him about finding Chriſt; and this appears by her turning herſelf to him, as we are told ſhe did, when he ſpake the word that gave her comfort. Chriſt called her by her name, Mary, and made himſelf known to her, juſt when ſhe had turned from him as hopeleſs of finding him. It is good, then, O diſcouraged communicant, to be in uſe of means, ſearching and trying yourſelf, and making preparation for this ordinance, however ſmall your hopes may be of ſucceſs: For a poor ſoul may ſometimes find Chriſt, when he hath leaſt hopes of doing ſo. "Or ever I was aware (ſaith the ſpouſe) my ſoul made me like the chariots of Amminadab," Cant. vi. 12.

DIRECT. IX. Set time apart for deep humiliation and mourning for your ſins, before you approach to the Lord's table.

HAVING found out your ſins by ſelf-examination, as before directed, you ought to be deeply humbled for them, and ingenuouſly confeſs them before the Lord in ſecret; and, that you may ſpeed the better in this work, join faſting with your humiliation, for we are commanded to turn to the Lord (Joel ii. 12.) *with faſting, with weeping, and with mourning.*

Faſting, ſo far as the ſtate of the body and health will allow, is one of God's appointed means for removing that drowſineſs and heavineſs, that dulneſs and deadneſs of ſpirit, which we are otherwiſe liable to; and alſo for bringing the body more in ſubjection to the ſoul, and fitting both for the better performance of holy duties, as meditation, prayer, reading, hearing, examining, judging

ing and reforming ourſelves. It tends to promote ſpiritual mindedneſs, kindle zeal, quicken prayer, and to wean the heart from the world; and the ſoul being hereby for a time taken off from the thoughts, cares, and pleaſures of this life, is the more diſpoſed to be wholly intent and taken up in the work and ſpecial duties of the day. Faſting likewiſe carries in it ſomewhat of a holy revenge upon the fleſh for its former exceſſes, which, in a ſincere penitent is acceptable to God, though it cannot make ſatisfaction to divine juſtice for the leaſt ſin. It doth alſo imply a deep ſenſe of our guiltineſs and ill-deſervings before God, and is a plain acknowledgement of our unworthineſs of the leaſt mercy, even of the common neceſſaries of life, and far leſs of the heavenly manna that God provides for his children in the ſacrament. Now, it is the humbled and ſelf-condemning ſinner that God is pleaſed to lift up and comfort. But it is not enough that the head "be bowed down as a bulruſh for a day," that the outward man be humbled, or the body chaſtened; this is not the faſt which God hath choſen: The ſoul muſt be afflicted before the Lord, and the man inwardly troubled and caſt down for offending God.

O communicant, believe it, and be firmly perſuaded of it, that repentance and humiliation for ſin is a moſt important and neceſſary work for thee before the ſacrament. Antinomians do vilipend this doctrine of repentance, and ſay, it is no part of the goſpel; that it is a legal duty, and not neceſſary to the obtaining of pardon. But, to ſhew you a little of the excellency and neceſſity of this duty, conſider that our Saviour, the great prophet of the church, doth teach it as one of the firſt and chief leſſons of the goſpel. When he ſent John Baptiſt, as the harbinger of the goſpel, the firſt text he preached on was *repentance*, and his doctrine was, Matt. iii. 2, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." When Chriſt, the author of the goſpel, appeared himſelf, the firſt ſermon he preached was a ſermon of repentance alſo, Mat. iv 17. "From that time Jeſus began to preach, and to ſay, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Yea, our Saviour tells us, that it

was for this very end and purpoſe he came down from heaven, and was made man, that he might preach repentance unto the world, Luke v. 32. "I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance." And accordingly, the firſt and chief thing that Chriſt commanded his apoſtles to preach was repentance, Mark vi. 12. Luke xxiv. 47. And, in obedience to theſe orders, the firſt thing that Peter preached to the Jews was repentance, Acts ii. 38. Nay, further, our Saviour tells us, that repentance is a chief part of his purchaſe for ſinners, and one of the chiefeſt gifts which he beſtows upon them. He not only came from heaven to preach repentance, but alſo to ſhed his blood to purchaſe repentance to us; and therefore he inſtructs his diſciples, Luke xxiv. 47, "to preach repentance to the world in his name," *i. e* as his purchaſe; and his apoſtles aſſure us, that he aroſe and aſcended for this very end, that he might beſtow the gift of repentance on his people, Acts v. 31. Now certainly, if repentance had not been ſo excellent a work, and ſuch a neceſſary goſpel-duty, Chriſt and his apoſtles had not inſiſted ſo much upon it; our Saviour had not begun his public miniſtry with it; nor had he told us ſo peremptorily, and ſo often, "Except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh"

Tertullian ſays of himſelf, that he was born to nothing elſe but to repentance: a ſaying well worthy of our moſt ſerious obſervation. Likewiſe it was the ſaying of a godly miniſter, "That if he were to die in the pulpit, he would wiſh to die preaching repentance; and, if out of the pulpit, he would wiſh to die practiſing repentance." This is a duty always in ſeaſon, and never more ſeaſonable than when we go to ſeal a covenant with God, or go to receive the ſeal of God's Spirit in the ſacrament. We know hard wax will not receive the impreſſion of the ſeal, wherefore we muſt firſt melt or ſoften the wax before we apply the ſeal; ſo the heart muſt be firſt ſoftened and melted by repentance and humiliation for ſin, before any impreſſion be made thereon by the heavenly ſeal of God's Spirit in the ſacrament.

What Bathſhebah ſaith, Prov. xxxi. 6. 7. is very applicable here, "Give ſtrong drink unto him that is ready

to

to periſh, and wine to to thoſe that be of heavy hearts (or bitter in ſoul.) Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his miſery no more." So the wine in the ſacrament is not for the ſecure and impenitent, but for thoſe who by repentance and humiliation for ſin are in poverty of ſpirit, bitterneſs of ſoul, and heavineſs of heart for grieving and offending God. The Lord is graciouſly pleaſed to appoint this wine for them, to refreſh and comfort their hearts againſt the ſenſe of their poverty and miſery. " Bleſſed are they that mourn at this occaſion) for they ſhall be comforted; their ſorrow ſhall be turned into joy."

But, if you come with impenitent, inſenſible and hard hearts to the Lord's table, you will kindle the Lord's wrath againſt you for crucifying his beloved Son As king Ahaſuerus's wrath was kindled againſt Haman for his bloody plot againſt his beloved Eſther and her people, even while he was at the banquet of wine, and preſently gave ſentence againſt him: So may the the King of heaven's wrath be kindled againſt thee, while at this ſpiritual banquet, and paſs ſentence on thee preſently, and ſay, " Let Satan enter in with the ſop, and ſeal him up under his hardneſs and impenitency, and carry him on to all ungodlineſs till he be ripe for hell.

What Chriſt ſaid of the Phariſees proſelyte, Matth. xxiii. 15. " He was made two-fold more the child of hell than themſelves," may well be ſaid of impenitent receivers; by their communicating in this caſe, they make themſelves two fold more the children of hell and the devil than they were before: For thereby they fall more under the power of ſatan; they increaſe their hardneſs, ſtrengthen their luſts; and to all their former ſins they add the guilt of profaning God's ordinance, crucifying the Son of God afreſh, and trampling his precious blood under foot.

Impenitent partaking is a crime ſo offenſive to a holy God, that it will bring all your other ſins freſh into God's remembrance, and excite him to viſit you for them, according to that word, Hoſ. viii. 13. " They ſacrifice fleſh for the ſacrifice of mine offerings, and eat it; but the Lord accepteth them not: That is ſad

enough, but worſe follows;" "Now will he remember their iniquity, and viſit their ſins." Now will he do it, even while they are offering their ſacrifice. O impenitent ſinners, God remembers your ſins at all times, but eſpecially when you come to the ſacrament in a hardened caſe; then will he remember how you have formerly abuſed his mercies, wounded his Son, grieved his Spirit, miſ ſpent your time, neglected his worſhip, dealt hypocritically with him, been unjuſt to your neighbours, hated his people, *&c.* So that he will, at the very time you are receiving, come and viſit your ſins, ſmite you with his wrath, and give ſatan power over you. O then, were it not far better for you, before you come to the Lord's table, to be remembering your ſins, and humbling yourſelves for them before the Lord; than to have God remembering them in wrath againſt you, when you are at the table?

Now, for your help in this matter ſet time apart before the ſacrament, read over our Larger Catechiſm upon the ten commandments; and, as you read, carefully obſerve and mark the duties you have omitted, and the ſins you have committed againſt every one of the commands; and from this you may form a black catalogue of your ſins, which you ought to ſpread, as Hezekiah did Sennacherib's letter, *before the Lord,* and likewiſe before the face of your own conſciences. Had we but our eyes enlightened by God's ſpirit, to take a view of ourſelves, and our manifold ſpots, in the glaſs of God's holy and extenſive law, then would we go humbly to God with ropes about our necks, ſorrows in our hearts, tears in our eyes, and confeſſions in our mouths, caſt ourſelves down at the footſtool of his mercy, and make full and particular acknowledgements of our guiltineſs before him.

And, to give ſome inſtances: When we view the firſt commandment, let us be humbled for our ſins againſt it, and confeſs them; "Ah! have I not been guilty of much heart atheiſm? Have I not doubted of the being or providence of God? Have I not much ignorance, and many wrong thoughts and miſapprehenſions of God? Have I not been forgetful of God my maker and preſerver? Have I not put the creature, the world, ſelf, and other things, in his room? Have I not aſcribed my mercies

cies to others, fortune, to my own wiſdom and induſtry, rather than to God? Alas, for my ſelf-love, ſelf-ſeeking, unbelief, diſtruſt, hatred of God, grieving his Spirit, diſlike of his image in his ordinances, his children, &c.

2*dly*, How have I ſinned againſt the ſecond command, by deviſing or approving other ways of worſhip than God hath appointed, by not prizing pure ordinances, by making repreſentations of God in my mind, and entertaining wrong conceptions of him?

3*dly*, Againſt the third command, by abuſing God's name, his ſcriptures, his ordinances; by irreverent approaches to God, hypocriſy, careleſs hearing and communicating; by perjury, ſwearing raſhly, breach of oaths and vows; by having a hand in the perjury or falſe-ſwearing of others; by wreſting the word, miſapplying providences, unthankfulneſs for mercies, inſenſibleneſs and incorrigibleneſs under judgments and afflictions.

4*thly*, Againſt the fourth command, by forgetfulneſs of the Sabbath before it came, not preparing for it, not labouring to prevent what might diſtract me in the duties of the Sabbath: By profaning the Sabbath when it came, by idleneſs, needleſs viſits, unſuitable thoughts, words and actions; by worldly cares and buſineſs on the Sabbath; by needleſs recreations, ſeeking my own pleaſures, not performing, or careleſs performing of the duties of the Sabbath, both in public and private. Alas, I have been ſo far from calling the Sabbath a delight, that oft times my heart hath ſaid, what a wearineſs is it? Ah, the ſtrict obſervation of the Sabbath hath been tedious to me, I have ſhifted it over, and ſaid, when ſhall the Sabbath be gone? &c.

5*thly*, Againſt the fifth command, by not behaving myſelf anſwerably to my natural, eccleſiaſtical, and political parents; not loving them, praying for them, and covering their infirmities: By not behaving ſuitably towards my inferiors, and not admoniſhing and encouraging them in well-doing, not correcting children, or doing it unduly, provoking them to wrath: And alſo carrying unſuitably towards my equals, envying their gifts, proſperity or grieving at their advancement.

6*thly*,

6thly, Againſt the ſixth command, by ſinful anger, hatred, malice, deſire of revenge, immoderate uſe of meat and drink; by quarrelling, fighting, ſtriking, wounding, and doing ſeveral things that tend to take away the lives of others; ſowing ſtrife and diſcord among friends, &c. by not being duly concerned for the preſervation of the lives of others, whether of their ſouls or bodies.

7thly, Againſt the ſeventh command, by unchaſte thoughts, words and actions; by unclean imaginations, obſcene ſpeeches, wanton geſtures, immodeſt apparel; not watching over my ſenſes, heart, words, actions; by going into bad company, occaſions of uncleanneſs; by drunkenneſs, gluttony, and other temptations thereunto.

8thly, Againſt the eighth command, by ſtealing, defrauding, oppreſſion, extortion, unfaithfulneſs in bargains and contracts, idleneſs, prodigality, inordinate prizing of wordly goods.

9thly, Againſt the ninth command, by ſlandering, backbiting, reviling, lying in jeſt or earneſt, concealing the truth I ſhould have ſpoken, ſpeaking the truth unſeaſonably, and to a wrong end, ſuborning falſe witneſſes, pleading for an evil cauſe, raſh cenſuring, aggravating ſmaller faults, countenancing evil reports, extenuating groſs ſins.

10thly, Againſt the tenth command, by diſcontent with my own condition, envying and grieving at my neighbour's good and welfare, impatience under affliction. Alas, for my innumerable breaches of God's holy commandments!

In the *next* place, take a view of the particular aggravations of your ſins, and be deeply humbled for them, and lay them out before God in their blackeſt and bloodieſt colours: "Ah, I have ſinned againſt more light and knowledge than others, againſt many checks of conſcience, warnings, admonitions and reproofs. I have ſinned againſt more mercies and experiences of God's kindneſs than others. I have had many gracious offers of peace and pardon; nay, God has given me ſweet intimations of his love and good-will to my ſoul; he

he hath ſometimes ſmiled on me in duty; given me enlargements, breakings and meltings of heart in prayer, hearing and communicating; but I have been moſt unthankful to him: Alas for my ingratitude for mercies! I have ſinned againſt more reſolutions, vows, covenants and engagements, to the contrary, than others have done. Ah, I have ſinned with deliberation, and fallen into the ſame ſins over again. I have ſinned againſt my confeſſions, my lamentations, and prayers. I have ſinned againſt God's rods and chaſtiſements upon myſelf, and againſt terrifying inſtances of God's judgments upon others. I have ſinned againſt the patience and long-ſuffering of God, that hath waited upon me for many years. Alas, I have ſinned againſt reaſon, conſcience, intereſt, and a thouſand other obligations. I have diſhonoured God, hardened the wicked, and opened their mouths againſt religion. I have gratified Satan, and brought up an ill report on the ways of God by my ſins, more than many others.

Moreover, how grievouſly have I ſinned againſt the goſpel, by ſlighting, not ſufficiently eſteeming, admiring, and being thankful for, the infinite love of God diſplayed in man's redemption. By not loving and rejoicing in Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified: By reſting on my duties, and not improving Chriſt, and relying on him in all his offices, not accounting all things loſs and dung for him: By not dying daily to ſin, nor ſorrowing for it; but often making light of that which nothing but the blood of Chriſt could expiate. Ah, I have not ſought the things of Chriſt as my own, I have not preferred Jeruſalem to my chief joy. My heart hath not (like Eli's) trembled for the ark of God, nor hath my ſoul (like Lot's) been vexed from day to day with the unlawful deeds of thoſe among whom I live. I have not mourned for the afflictions of God's people, for the ſigns of God's anger, or for the ſins of the times. Alas for the infirmities, imperfections, and iniquities of my holy things! Oh, the heart-hardneſs, formality, earthly-mindedneſs, deadneſs, indiſpoſition, wanderings, wearineſs, unpreparedneſs, and want of reliſh that hath attended my attendance on holy ordinances, and particularly

larly this of the Lord's ſupper! I have reſted in the mere out-ſide of duties. I have had little appetite after this refreſhing ordinance of the Lord's ſupper. I have not approached to it with ſuch ſolemn preparation, examination, humiliation, renewing of covenant, as I ought to have done. I have walked unanſwerably after the communion, and have not minded my reſolutions and engagements as becomes a worthy communicant"

Having thus accuſed yourſelves, and confeſſed your ſins before God, as far as you can remember; proceed alſo to judge and condemn yourſelves from them, ſaying, "O what a wretched rebel againſt God have I been; yea, even a den of filthineſs, a ſty of uncleanneſs, and a ſink of miſery! I have been a heaven-daring, God-provoking, Chriſt crucifying, ſpirit-quenching, law-breaking, goſpel deſpiſing, and ſoul-murdering ſinner! Lord, can thy arms of mercy open to receive ſuch a monſter of wickedneſs as I have been? Surely I deſerve rather to be trampled under the feet of thy juſtice, than to be embraced in the arms of thy mercy; for, alas, I have trampled under my feet thy glorious attributes. I have abuſed thy mercy and patience, and contemned thy wiſdom and power. I have deſpiſed thy goodneſs, that hath been unto me like the dropping dew. I have incenſed the infinite power of my dread Sovereign againſt me, who by a word can unhinge the world, and tear up its foundations as eaſily as he laid them. I have exaſperated the juſtice of that mighty One who by his breath can crumble me to duſt, and conſume me to powder. Lord, I have ſinned againſt the cleareſt light and deareſt love: Nay, I repeated and reiterated my heinous ſins; I have gone from committing ſin to confeſſing ſin, and from confeſſing ſin to committing ſin again. Ah! I have lived as careleſly and irreligiouſly, as if there had been no God to puniſh, nor devil to torment; no ſweetneſs in heaven, nor bitterneſs in hell. O what indignities and affronts haſt thou born with from me, a poor, undeſerving, ill-deſerving, yea, hell-deſerving wretch! Never were the wages more due to the labourer, than damnation is due to me. If every ſin brings

down

down a curſe, and deſerves hell, how many thouſand hells, how many millions of curſes, do I deſerve? O how miſerable ſhould I be for ever, if thou, Lord, ſhould deal with me according to my deſervings! I have forfeited all intereſt in thy favour, and all claim to thy mercy: I deſerve not to live in thy world, nor to breathe in thy air; but to have my name blotted out from under heaven, yea, to have all the curſes of thy book, and all the vials of thy wrath poured out on me, even a deluge of fire and brimſtone rained upon me without intermiſſion. I deſerve to be hung up in chains of everlaſting darkneſs, to be a monument of juſtice, and a deriſion of devils for evermore. I caſt down my ſoul, Lord, at thy feet; though thou ſhould take it up and fling it into hell, I behoved to ſay, *Thou art righteous:* For the hotteſt place in hell is too good for me

"Oh, ſhall ſuch a wretch as I, think of approaching to thy table? What may I expect there but frowns from the Maſter of the feaſt? While the Sun of righteouſneſs ariſeth with healing in his wings to thoſe that fear thy name, thy wrath may burn againſt me as fire, and devour me as ſtubble. The day of feaſting and rejoicing, ſacrifice and atonement, to thy ſincere ſervants, may be a day of wrath and trouble, darkneſs and gloomineſs, unto me. While they are ſaying, *Come, let us go into the houſe of the Lord, our feet ſhall ſtand within thy gates, O Zion, within thy courts, O God:* I may juſtly be ſaying, The great day of his wrath is come, and who ſhall be able to ſtand? And when thy children, Lord, ſhall go with confidence and preſent themſelves before thee, arrayed in the righteouſneſs of thy Son, lifting up their heads with joy, knowing the time of their redemption draws nigh: I may be hiding myſelf in the dens and rocks of the mountains, ſaying, *Fall on me, and hide me from the face of him that ſits on the throne.* I may ſee them taken in and ſet down at the table above with the King, and myſelf eternally thruſt out: And, while they are feaſting and rejoicing at thy table, I may juſtly be lying under the wrath of the Lamb.

"Oh, Lord, I have made light of the goſpel feaſt, and preferred the things of the world before it; ſo that thou

mayeſt juſtly ſay to me, that I ſhall never taſte of thy ſupper; or, if I go to it, that it ſhall not be for the better, but for the worſe; I ſhall meet with a frown inſtead of a ſmile, a curſe inſtead of a welcome, a breach inſtead of a bleſſing. Lord, thou mayeſt inſtead of bread give me a ſtone, and for the cup of the new teſtament, give me a cup of wrath and trembling. Thou mayeſt juſtly turn my hard heart into a ſtone, inſtead of turning my ſtony heart into a heart of fleſh."

When thou haſt in this manner aggravated thy crimes and condemned thyſelf, yet do not deſpair; but as the poor condemned criminal may cry for mercy, ſo let a poor, humbled, ſelf-condemned ſinner, cry to a merciful God for pity. Say, "Lord, I am aſhamed and confounded at my former madneſs and folly: I have nothing to plead for myſelf, except, with the poor publican ſtanding afar off, to ſmite upon my breaſt, and lift up mine eyes to heaven, and ſay, "God be merciful to me a ſinner." All my refuge, all my hope, is in the free mercy of God, through Jeſus Chriſt. Lord, make me a monument of free grace to all the ages of eternity. But, alas, I am aſhamed to ſpeak of mercy and grace, who have already abuſed ſo much thereof, yea, trampled on the blood that ſhould ſave me. But, Lord, what can I do, or whither ſhall I go? Should I deſpair with Cain, or make away myſelf with Judas? Oh, no: This, Lord, were to affront thy mercy yet more, and utterly to reject the goſpel-remedy which thou valueſt ſo highly. This thing I will not do; but, ſeeing I have heard ſo glorious a report of the mercy of the king of Iſrael, I will even venture to his throne of grace, where free mercy reigns to pardon abounding ſins, and where Jeſus Chriſt ſits to ſave the chief of ſinners. Lord Jeſus, reach from heaven thy merciful hand, to ſave me a poor ſinner, who, like Peter, am ready to ſink in the ſea of my ſins and miſeries; that ſo the bleſſing of a heavy laden ſinner, that is ready to periſh, may come on thy head for ever. *Lord, ſave me, or elſe I periſh;* waſh away the guilt of my many heinous ſins, with the merit of that blood which ran down from thy wounds on the croſs, that I am to ſee repreſented in the ſacrament, or I am undone.

undone. Lord, I am told of the efficacy of this blood, that it hath a mighty current, and the higheſt mountains of guilt cannot ſtop its courſe: Oh, let the bleſſed experiment be tried on me, as it hath been on thouſands before me. I am alſo told, that thou haſt ſought after many ſinners while running from thee; nay, followed them to the very gates of hell with a pardon in thy hand; and, when ſatan has been ready to tumble them in, thou haſt caught them and brought them back again. And, wilt thou now refuſe me, who am ſeeking after thee? Lord, thou heardſt and helped, nay, died for thine enemies, before they cried to thee for help: And, wilt thou now reject me, who am come to lay down my arms, and cry to thee for mercy? Haſt thou not ſaid, that he that confeſſeth and forſaketh his ſins, ſhall find mercy? Thy word was never yet known to fail? Lord, be it to me according to thy word."

And, having betaken thyſelf to Chriſt thy Surety's merit, humbly plead it with God for thy pardon and acceptance; ſay, "Lord, I have indeed broken all thy commands; but, hath not my Surety fulfilled them all? I have, alas, affronted thy juſtice; but, hath not my Surety ſatisfied it? I have deſerved thy wrath, but he hath endured it. The chaſtiſement of my peace was upon him: O let the merit of his righteouſneſs be upon me. Lord, remember not what I have done againſt thee; but remember what he hath done and ſuffered for me. Oh, when I conſider thy greatneſs and my own unworthineſs, thy purity and my uncleanneſs, thy glory and my vileneſs, I am confounded and diſcouraged to draw near to thy table: But when I conſider thy bounty and goodneſs, my Saviour's merit, and thy mercy and readineſs to forgive, I am encouraged to come. And, O that I could come with a broken and a contrite heart, which is a pleaſant ſacrifice to God!"

Object. "But, (ſaith ſome poor diſcouraged ſoul) I would fain ſet about the work of humiliation, in order to prepare me for the ſacrament; but, O my hard heart will not break; alas, it is ſo hardened and bound up, that I cannot get one tear for ſin."

Anſ. Remember that it is Chriſt, who hath purchaſed, who hath promiſed, and who freely beſtoweth repentance on poor ſinners; therefore go to him and ſeek it. And, that it may be wrought in you, plead for the bleſſed Spirit, which he hath alſo promiſed, to be ſent to take off the ſcales of blindneſs from your eyes which ſatan hath put on, that ſo you may ſee ſin in its blackneſs and deformity. Cry with Job, *What I know not, teach thou me. O make me to know my tranſgreſſion and my ſin.* God hath ſet before you ſeveral looking-glaſſes to repreſent the evil of ſin to you; O make uſe of them. You have the glaſs of God's holy nature, the glaſs of his holy law, the glaſs of the damned's torments, and the glaſs of Chriſt's ſufferings: Look frequently into theſe. View the infinite purity and ſpotleſsneſs of God's nature; conſider his holy law in its ſpiritual meaning and large extent; meditate on the eternal ſhrieks and howlings of damned ſouls: And, in a ſpecial manner, behold Chriſt's bloody agonies for ſin. A right look of him whom ye have pierced, will cauſe you mourn, Zech. xii. 10.

Come then, O hard-hearted ſinner, and behold how thy ſins pierced Chriſt's head with thorns, his hands and feet with nails, his ſide with a ſpear, and his heart with ſorrows: Behold how they preſſed him down in the garden, till he ſweat blood: Behold how they bound a heavy croſs on his back, till he fainted with the load: Behold how they nailed him to the curſed tree, and made God frown upon him, ſo that he was forced to cry out, *my God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* O, canſt thou look on Golgotha, or Gethſemane, with dry eyes, or an unconcerned heart? Canſt thou ſee Chriſt's eyes weep, and his heart melted like wax within him, and yet thy heart continue hard, and thine eyes dry? Come, hearken to his dying groans, and look to his bleeding wounds: Think you hear him ſaying to you, *Behold what your ſins have done! Is there any ſorrow like my ſorrow?* O, wilt thou not ſay to my hard heart, "What is this that thou haſt done? Is not this the Son of God and the King of glory, that thou haſt murdered by thy ſins; and wilt thou not be grieved for them? Shall the hard rocks rent, the dead earth ſhake, the temple's

temple's vail rend, the ſun vail its bright face, the heavens put on a mourning habit, and the whole creation look ſad, when Chriſt is ſuffering for thy ſins, and thou the guilty criminal, that ſhouldſt have eternally howled in hell's flames, ſtand only unconcerned?" *Be aſtoniſhed, O heavens, at this!* And let thy hard heart bluſh and be aſhamed for it. Ah! ſhall the hiſtory of Joſeph in the pit move your heart more than that of Chriſt upon the croſs? Shall the news of the tragical death or ſufferings of one of your friends or countrymen among the Turks, move your heart ſooner than the death and ſufferings of the innocent Son of God? O, then, go to God and complain of thy hard heart; take it and lay it before God's promiſe, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. and plead that he would take it away, according to his word, "Lord, thou curedſt all manner of plagues and diſeaſes which were brought to thee while thou waſt on earth: And haſt not thou the ſame bowels of mercy now in heaven? Surely thy goodneſs is ſtill the ſame, thy hands are not ſhortened that they cannot ſave: Nay, there are holes now in thy hands, to let bleſſings drop through them the more freely on us. Thou art my only phyſician, and to thee I will look for the cure: Lord, nothing will do it but the plaiſter of thy blood."

Mourning is abſolutely neceſſary for thee, O communicant, if thou wouldſt have the wine of conſolation in the ſacrament. When did Jacob find God in Bethel, but when he wept and made ſupplication to God? Hoſ. xii. 4. When did Mary meet with Chriſt, but when ſhe ſought him weeping and ſorrowing? John xx. 11. If you caſt out a flood of tears in Chriſt's way, he will not be able for his compaſſionate heart to paſs over it, but will turn in and lodge with you.

Object. "Alas! I cannot win to tears for ſin. Are tears abſolutely neceſſary?"

Anſ. They are very deſirable where they are; the penitent's tears are the joy of angels, and the delight of God, he keeps a bottle for them: Bet yet all conſtitutions are not alike moiſt; a tender heart may be matched with a dry brain that cannot eaſily command tears; and

[illegible] may lay more stress on tears than on [illegible] heart that produces them, not minding [illegible] more to the inward frame than to the [illegible] expressions. But the truth is, if thou be one [illegible] get tears for other things, for wordly losses [illegible], and yet can find none for sin, it is a sign thy [illegible] is not right. How many, Alas, can weep abun[illegible] for the loss of a child, yea, for a horse or cow, and yet have not one tear for the loss of their soul, or of Christ's favour or presence!

Direct. X. Flee to Jesus Christ by Faith, and embrace him as he is offered to you in the Gospel, before you come to his Table.

NONE have a right to Christ's table, but those who [illegible] the way of faith; for it is a feast [illegible] for believers.

[illegible] above, concerning the multitude [illegible] for which you ought to be [illegible] serve to shew your great need [illegible] them. Think not that [illegible] or tears for sin, can any [illegible] God for it, or merit accept[illegible] This were to put these things [illegible] you to him [illegible] instead [illegible] God for [illegible] to Christ [illegible] pardon and salva[illegible] in respect [illegible]

[illegible]

I ſhall therefore make uſe of ſome motives to preſs poor periſhing ſinners to flee from ſin and wrath to Jeſus Chriſt the only Saviour, and to receive and reſt upon him for life and ſalvation; and then come to the ſacrament, to get their right and title to Chriſt, and all his purchaſe, ſealed and confirmed.

I. Take a view of the miſery of a natural and Chriſtleſs condition: and O that God would open your eyes to let you ſee it, and convince you, that, while thou art in this ſtate, thou art a rebel to thy God, a prodigal to thy father, a ſlave to thy luſts, and an alien to the common-wealth of Iſrael! If thou comeſt not to Chriſt with thy burdens, the whole burden of unpardoned ſin lies upon thy own back; and this is a burden that will ſink thee lower than the grave; nay, it will preſs thee to the loweſt hell, and keep thee eternally ſinking there. Conſider alſo, how vile and lothſome thou and all thy actions, whether natural, civil, or religious, are in the ſight of a holy God: While thou art of Chriſt, thy ſoul is naked, and ſwarms with the vermin of filthy luſts; and thou haſt neither a garment to cover thee, nor a fountain to waſh thee: The leproſy of ſin ſpreads over all, ſo that, from the *crown of the head to the ſole of the foot, there is nothing but bruiſes and putrifying ſores;* ſo that there is no mire ſo unclean, no vomit ſo lothſome, no carrion ſo offenſive, no peſtilence ſo nauſeous, as thou art, in thy Chriſtleſs ſtate, in the eyes of a holy God who cannot look upon iniquity but with abhorrence. Again, conſider, thou art a ſlave to Satan the worſt of tyrants; he rules and works in your hearts, as a workman doth in his ſhop, Eph. ii. 2. He uſes your powers, faculties, ſenſes and members, according to his pleaſure: He ſays, *Go, and you go: Do this and you do it.* Your bondage is worſe than the Iſraelites under Pharaoh; for they groaned under theirs, but, alas! you are ſenſible of yours, neither will you believe it. The devil knows, that if you perceived your ſlavery, you would ſeek to make your eſcape from him; therefore, to make ſure work, he deals with you as the Philiſtines did with Sampſon; puts out your eyes, that you may not

ſee

ſee your chains, nor look to Chriſt for liberty: O that God would open them, and cauſe you groan under your fetters, and look to Chriſt for relief!

Moreover, while thou art in thy Chriſtleſs ſtate, God's wrath is ſtill burning againſt thee, the flaming ſword of juſtice is always over thy neck, Pſal. vii. 11. "God is angry with the wicked every day," every day of the week, and every hour of the day: When thou goeſt out and comeſt in, riſeſt up or lieſt down, God is ſtill angry with thee; yea, *he hath bent his bow, and made ready his arrows*, which are ſteeled with wrath, and headed with vengeance: Nay, his bow is drawn, and his arrows are at the flight; and, O Chriſtleſs ſoul, thou art the very butt thereof; and if he let them fly, they will pierce thee to the very ſoul, and who will heal that wound? What a dangerous ſtate is this?

And, further, all the curſes of the law are levelled againſt thee, and a juſt God is engaged by his oath to ruin thee, if thou abideſt in this ſtate, Heb. iii. 18. "To whom ſware he, that they ſhould not enter into his reſt, but to them that believed not?" Should not the thoughts of this make thee tremble? Were it but the oath of a man, or company of men, to procure thy death, as of thoſe forty men that bound themſelves with an oath, they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul, it would bereave [illegible]e of thy night's reſt and quiet till they were made friends with thee: And, will the oath of the great God have no effect upon thee, nor move thee to flee to Chriſt for protection and reconciliation? Who can help thee or deal for thee, if Chriſt be neglected? With what face canſt thou look to him, or cry for mercy from him, when he comes to judge thee at the laſt day? If thou remain Chriſtleſs now, thou wilt be ſpeechleſs, helpleſs and hopeleſs then. O think, what pale faces, quivering lips, fainting hearts, and trembling conſciences, will be among Chriſtleſs ſinners then! How will their heads hang down and knees knock together, and cry, *Alas, for the day!* They can look no where for comfort; for the Judge frowns on them, the ſaints deride them, their own friends upbraid them, the angels mock them, the devil

devil ſcoffs at them, the heavens thunder againſt them, the earth flames about them, and hell groans for them, and down they will go roaring and howling for ever.

O Chriſtleſs ſoul, how canſt thou think to ly in that dark dungeon for ever, where there is nothing but weeping and gnaſhing of teeth to be heard, and utter darkneſs to be ſeen, but never a blink of the light of God's favour to all eternity? How wilt thou live in that pit where there is no water? Not a drop of comfort or refreſhment to the thirſty ſcorched priſoners; no, not ſo much as one drop to cool their tongue; the torments here are both endleſs and eaſeleſs. O poor Chriſtleſs ſoul, thou art, as it were, apprehended by Juſtice for thy debt, and brought the length of this priſon door, and there are hundreds of diſeaſes and devils waiting for a warrant to open the door to let you in; and, wilt thou not employ a ſurety nor ſeek for a ranſom, when Juſtice is waiting a while to ſee if thou wilt do it, and Chriſt is earneſtly offering himſelf to be thy cautioner, and his blood to ranſom thee from this pit? And to be ſure no other thing will do it. See Zech. ix. 11.

II. As it is God's command that you ſhould receive and believe on his Son Jeſus Chriſt; ſo he declares that it is a work above all others moſt pleaſing to him, John vi. 29. It is emphatically called his *commandment*, 1 John iii. 23. being a command he values more than all other commands in the Bible: And ſo, upon the other hand, there is no ſin ſo provoking to God, as unbelief and rejection of Chriſt; yea, he is more offended with it, than with the breaking of all his other commands, See Heb. x. 28. 29. Put all your ſins in one ſcale, and unbelief in another, and you will find that unbelief weighs down all the reſt; for it is a ſlighting of the whole work of redemption, which is the maſter-piece of all God's works, being that which his heart is moſt ſet upon, and he hath been at moſt pains about, 1 John iv. 9. O be perſuaded then to do the work that is moſt acceptable to God, and obey his great command of *believing upon the name of his Son.* The whole creation obeys his commands; he commands the ſun to run its daily courſe, and it obeys him; he commands the ſea

to ebb and flow twice a day, and it obeys to a minute; he commands the angels and all the hoſt of heaven, and they punctually obey him: And will you only be diſobedient to him, and that to his beloved command, when yet he hath done more for you than for the whole creation?

III. Conſider what an unſpeakable mercy and happineſs it is to you, to enjoy the free offers of Jeſus Chriſt, and to have God commanding you to receive him. How would the fallen angels value ſuch a mercy, if they had it! They would not be loth to leave their dungeon and accept of a Saviour, as you are: But their ſtate is eternally hopeleſs and deſperate, there is no remedy for their miſery. O do not put yourſelves in the ſame caſe with them, by ſlighting the offered remedy. How would damned ſouls prize ſuch an offer! The leaſt news and remoteſt hopes of it, would make them leap in their chains, and ſing in the flames. O how glad would they be to lift up their flaming hands to grip to the cords of love and mercy, if they could be let down to them in that dark dungeon! Why then ſhould ye wilfully put yourſelves into the ſame hopeleſs condition with them, by your unbelief? Nay, your neglecting ſo many offers will ſink you far deeper in that ſcalding lake of fire and brimſtone, and increaſe your flames to more vehemency than thoſe of others who have not been ſo privileged. O how will devils, Turks, Jews, and Pagans, upbraid you there, for your inexcuſable folly in ſlighting your mercy, and deſtroying your ſouls! Be wiſe then in time, prize your privilege, and *conſider the things that belong to your peace, before they be hid from your eyes.*

IV. Conſider what an excellent and ſuitable help Chriſt is for fallen ſinners; he is well furniſhed and qualified for your caſe; he hath gold for your poverty, eye-ſalve for your blindneſs, balm for your wounds, phyſic for your diſeaſes, bread for your hunger, white raiment for your nakedneſs, a fountain for your pollution, and a ranſom for your debt and bondage. In a word, he hath a broad plaiſter for your broad ſore, a deep fountain for your deep guilt; he is the chief of Saviours

Saviours for the chief of ſinners. Behold how one deep calls to another, the depth of thy miſery to the depth of his mercy. Are your ſins and miſeries very extenſive, then view the large dimenſions of his mercy: Who can fathom the height, the depth, the breadth, or the length of it? As for its height, it is high as heaven, and ſurmounts the higheſt mountains of guilt; it is ſo deep, that it can bury the greateſt of your ſins; it is as broad as the eaſt is diſtant from the weſt; and, for its length, it is from everlaſting to everlaſting: So that it fully anſwers all your wants and miſeries. In Chriſt there is all you need or can deſire; there is both food and phyſic, clothing, ſtrength and cordials. O ſinner, here is blood to juſtify thee, and water to cleanſe thee; here is the water of life, O believer, that will reſtore thy ſoul again, renew thy youth as the eagles, cure all thy diſeaſes, and heal all thy pains. In a word, you have in Chriſt all that can make you good, all that can make you great, and all that can make you happy.

V. Conſider how near you are to Chriſt and mercy. The remedy is prepared, and ſalvation is brought to your very door: So that you need not ſay, *Who will aſcend to heaven, and bring me down the water of life?* For it is brought to earth to thy hand: You need not ſay, *Who will roll me away the ſtone from the well-mouth?* For Chriſt hath done it for thee; and as it is now a fountain opened and running by your door, O why will ye be ſo mad as periſh for thirſt beſide this fountain? Or ſtarve for hunger beſide a full feaſt? Or die of your wounds beſide a phyſician? And all for want of heart to accept the offer? O, it would be ſad to be ſo near Chriſt, and yet eternally miſs him; to periſh like the thief on the croſs with a Saviour at your ſide; to be within a ſtep of him, and yet never touch him; yea, to ſink into hell betwixt the outſtretched arms of his mercy, and with the ſweet calls ſounding in your ears. What a heart-ſtinging conſideration will this be to you in that place of torment for ever? O then, ſtir up yourſelves to take hold of Chriſt, when he is ſo near and in your offer: Strive earneſtly, while there is an ark prepared, and a window opened in the ſide of it, and the

hand of mercy put forth to pull in ſhelterleſs doves that can find no reſt elſewhere: I ſay, ſtrive to come near by the wings of faith, make your neſt (at leaſt) beſide the hole's mouth: Be not found hovering without, leſt the flood waſh you from the ſides of the ark, and ye periſh miſerably. If you be ſo fooliſh, you will wiſh eternally that you had never heard of Chriſt, or that you had been born among the wild Indians or Mahometans, that never heard a ſermon, or witneſſed a communion.

VI. Conſider how importunate Chriſt is in his offers, and how much he preſſeth you to receive him. "Wiſdom crieth in the ſtreets," Prov. i. 20. Chriſt makes loud and open proclamation of himſelf, and oft repeats his calls, Iſa li. 1. "Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea come," &c. Behold, how earneſt he is with ſinners, that he bids them come to him three times in one verſe, *Come, come, come.* What alluring methods hath he taken to gain your hearts! How tenderly and affectionately doth he call and court backward ſouls! Iſa. li. 4. "Hearken unto me, my people, give ear unto me, O my nation." What melting expreſſions are theſe? *My people! My nation!*

But, if calls do not prevail, he comes himſelf to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt. He came perſonally in the days of his fleſh, and now he comes by his Spirit in his word and ordinances. The three wiſe men came from the eaſt a long journey to ſeek Chriſt; but now Chriſt hath come from heaven to earth, a long journey; yea, come to every one of your congregations to ſeek you: And, are you not willing to be found of him?

Nay, he is content to follow you when you run away from him, and purſue you with his gracious offers. As the rock followed the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs with its running ſtreams of water, ſo Chriſt, our ſpiritual rock, follows you now with the ſtreams of his mercy and blood, to waſh and ſave you. O ſinner, if you will not hear the words of his mouth, hearken to the call of his wounds, which are opened as ſo many mouths to plead

plead with you. He hath ſuffered his bleſſed ſide to be opened, that ye might look into his bleeding heart, and ſee it panting with love, and alſo hear the ſounding of his bowels towards you. Will not this prevail? Then behold him by faith with a heavy croſs on his back, weighed down with your ſins, and the curſes of a broken law, following you, and calling after you. Hear him knocking with his nailed hands, at the door of your hearts, ſaying, Open to me, poor periſhing ſinner; give me harbour in thy heart, behold what I have ſuffered from heaven, earth, and hell, for thee; look what juſtice hath done; look what the devils, the Romans, the Jews, and my own diſciples, have done. View my head, my ſide, my hands and my feet, my wounded body, and my bruiſed ſoul. Oh, canſt thou find in thy heart to keep Chriſt at the door, when thus wounded, bleeding, mangled for thee? Wilt thou let him ſtay all day long, when he hath put on his dyed garments, and red apparel, to court thy backward heart, and when he is ſaying, O ſinner, if thou wilt not believe, *reach hither thy hand, and feel the print of the nails; yea, thruſt it into my pierced ſide, and feel my warm bleeding heart, and ſee if I love you not?* Wilt thou deny him acceſs, who has done ſo much for thee?

Will not this prevail? Then behold him diſplaying his glorious beauty and excellency before thine eyes in a preached goſpel, to win thy heart. Will not miniſters commendation of him move thee? Then hear how he commends himſelf; "I am the roſe of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys; I am the true vine; I am the good Shepherd," &c. And, will you not believe his own report, who cannot lye? Surely he is in good earneſt with you when he takes this courſe.

Will not this do? Then hearken how mournfully he complains when he wants ſucceſs, and paſſionately regrets your folly in rejecting him. He ſighs when he mentions it, Pſal. lxxxi. 13. "O that my people had hearkened unto me!" He bitterly laments it, Matth. xxiii. 37. "O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not!" He doubles the name, to ſhew his tender affection;

tion; as David when he regrets his ſon Abſalom, "O my ſon Abſalom, my ſon, my ſon! &c. How often would I have gathered you under my wings?" How many an affectionate ſermon, call, and invitation have I given you, but all to no purpoſe? Shall I go through a ſea of wrath and blood to ſave you, and will ye not accept of me when I have done it? Shall I ſhed my blood in vain? Shall I bear the wrath of God, the ſcorn of men, the terror of death, and curſe of the law, to no effect? Will ye ſtill prefer your ſins before me, and hear ſatan's knocks ſooner than mine.

Hear that compaſſionate complaint, John v. 40. "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." As if he had ſaid, "Why run ye ſo faſt from your Saviour? Why come ye not to me, who am come from heaven to ſeek and ſave you? It is not an enemy, but a friend, ye run from: The worſe turn I would do you is to ſave your lives: Ye will go, without much preſſing, to the devil, to get death and eternal damnation; but ye will not come to me to get life and eternal ſalvation. O what an inexpreſſible madneſs are ye guilty of!"

Behold how he wept for ſelf-deſtroying Jeruſalem, rejecting his offers, Luke xix. 41. When he ſat down to conſider their caſe, his bowels yearned with pity, his tongue broke forth in lamentation, and his eyes guſhed out with tears; ſo that his weeping even interrupted his voice, and made him utter ſhort and abrupt expreſſions, "If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this day," &c. Where he ſeems to pauſe at every other word, and drop firſt a word, and then a tear. What a moving ſight was, to ſee the Son of God in ſuch a pang of grief, and flood of tears, for loſt ſinners? Had he been enquired at, as he did Mary, John xx. 15. "Bleſt Lord, what ſeekeſt thou? Why weepeſt thou?" His anſwer readily would have been, I ſeek not myſelf, I weep not for myſelf; for I ſhall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, though ſinners be not gathered: But I weep to ſee ſinners ſo mad as to reject their Saviour and ſalvation rather than part with their luſts, that have damnation following them at the heels; it is my grief to ſee them content rather to caſt themſelves headlong into the devil's

vil's arms, than throw themſelves into my arms of mercy, or embrace me in the arms of their faith. O! did Chriſt weep for you, poor ſinners; and, will ye not weep for yourſelves? Did his heart melt with pity for you; and will not your's melt with deſires towards him?

Can he do more to win your hearts than this? Yea, if this do not, he is pleaſed to expoſtulate the matter with you, and lay your danger before you; "Turn ye, turn ye (ſaith he) for why will ye die?" Yea, he condeſcends to reaſon the matter with you in a familiar way; "Come (ſays he) let us reaſon together," Iſai. i. "O my people what have I done unto thee?" Mic. vi. 3. "What iniquity have ye found in me?" What want of unſuitableneſs have ye ſeen in me? *Have I been a barren wilderneſs to you? Are not my ways equal?* Thus he ſeeks to draw you with the cords of a man, and with the bonds of love, Hoſ. xi. 4. And if there ariſe objections in your heart againſt coming to Chriſt, and receiving him for your Saviour, ſee how carefully he lays out himſelf in his word to anſwer them all; for he well foreſaw every one of them: Produce your cauſe (ſaith the Lord) bring forth your ſtrong reaſons, I am ready to hear and anſwer all your ſcruples.

O! ſaith ſome poor humbled ſoul, *I have no right to come to Chriſt, for I am a great ſinner.* O! ſaith Chriſt, "I came not to call the righteous but ſinners to repentance."

Object. "But I am the chief of ſinners, my ſins are red as crimſon." O! ſaith Chriſt, "I can make them white as wool:" Nay, it was my errand into the world, to ſave ſuch as thou art, 1 Tim. i. 15.

Object. "But I am ſick and wounded: what hath Chriſt to do with me?" O! ſaith Chriſt, it is my proper employment to be taken up with you; for the "whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick," Mat. xi. Am not I the good Samaritan, who am come to pour oil into thy ſores, "and tenderly bind up thy wounds?" Pſal. cxlvii. 3.

Object. "But I have no ground to hope, for I am a loſt wretch." O! ſaith Chriſt, I came for this very errand,

errand, "to ſeek and to ſave that which is loſt," Luke xix. 10. and many a loſt ſheep have I ſought and found.

Object. "But I am paſt cure, for I am quite dead and rotten in the grave of ſin." O! ſaith Chriſt, "I am the Reſurrection and the Life; he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live," John xi. 25. And again he ſaith, Eph. v. 14. "Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light."

Object. "But I am a ſlave to ſin and ſatan, and a priſoner to juſtice." O! ſaith Chriſt, I came to "proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound," Iſa. lxi. 1. Yea, "I have the key of David, that opens and none can ſhut." I have the blood of the covenant, that brings priſoners out of the pit. Turn ye to the ſtrong hold, ye priſoners of hope, Zech. ix. 11. 12.

Object. "But I have heavy burdens that weigh me down." O! ſaith Chriſt, come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.

Object. "But my hand is withered, I cannot receive Chriſt or any thing from him" Then do as the man who had the withered hand, make a mint upon Chriſt's call, and he will enable thee to ſtretch out thy hand.

Object. "But I am lame, and cannot walk in Chriſt's ways." O! ſaith Chriſt, I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes, Ezek. xxxvi. 6. "Then ſhall the lame man leap as an hart," Iſa. xxxv. 6.

Object. "But what if Chriſt withdraw his Spirit and grace from me again?" No, ſaith Chriſt, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee, Heb. xiii.

Object. "But may not I, notwithſtanding, leave him, and make apoſtacy?" No, ſaith Chriſt, the covenant runs otherwiſe, Jer. iii. 19. "Thou ſhalt call me, my father, and ſhalt not turn away from me." Chriſt is the ſurety for thy perſeverance.

Object. "But I will be overcome by ſtrong temptations." No, ſaith Chriſt, my grace ſhall be ſufficient for thee.

Object. "But (ſaith ſome poor ſenſible ſinner) alas! my caſe is not yet touched, for it is ſingular: My ſins are

are heinous and peculiar, they are againſt light, love, conſcience, vows, and a thouſand obligations: There is none that knows what a ſinner I have been, but God and my own conſcience: Will Chriſt ever accept of ſuch a wretch as me?

Anſ. Art thou worſe than a deviliſh Manaſſeh, or a perſecuting Paul, whom Chriſt pitied and ſaved? Art thou worſe than Mary Magdalene, who was a moſt notorious vile wretch? Yet ſeven devils, and an army of luſts, could not keep Chriſt out of her heart. Nay, though thy heart were as foul and black as hell, and thy life did ſwarm with the moſt abominable ſins; yet, Chriſt is both able and willing to ſave thee, if thou come to him. Are you worſe than thoſe in that black catalogue? 1 Cor. vi. 9. 10. Read and ſee what a black roll is there; and yet the apoſtle ſaith to the believing Corinthians, ver 11. "Such were ſome of you, yet ye are waſhed," &c. The blood of Chriſt is a powerful fountain, and is able to waſh away the greateſt ſins that ever were committed, be they ever ſo black or bloody: God gave full proof of this, by the firſt ſin we read of that was cleanſed by this blood after it was ſhed, even the murder of the Son of God, Acts ii. 36. 38. This was the moſt prodigious wickedneſs that ever the ſun ſaw; (yea, the ſun fainted at the ſight, as afraid to look on it) for ſuppoſe a man were able to pull heaven and earth to pieces, deſtroy the angels, and murder all mankind, he would not contract ſo monſtrous a guilt as thoſe did in crucifying the Son of God, whoſe perſon was infinitely ſuperior to the whole creation: Yet thouſands, that were actors in this black tragedy, were waſhed by this blood, to give us a convincing experiment of its infinite value and virtue, and that no ſin or guilt whatſoever was too ſtrong for it: "The blood of Chriſt (ſaith John, 1 John i. 7.) cleanſeth us from all ſin."

Object. "But though Chriſt's blood be ſufficient, yet I have no right to it."

Anſ. Be what you will, you have a full and ſufficient warrant from the goſpel call to flee to it. See what Chriſt injoins his apoſtles to do, Mark xvi. 15. "Go

into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," *q. d.* " Make offer of my blood to all without distinction, even to the worst of sinners, every creature, be they never so wicked, yea, though they have sinned themselves unto the likeness of beasts and devils; yet, if they be creatures of Adam's race, offer my blood, my mercy, and my merits to them: Invite and press them to come unto me, *and him that cometh I will in no wise cast out.* O sinner! accept of the gospel-offer; and, whatever you have been, you shall find there is mercy enough in God's bowels to pity you, merit enough in Christ's blood to purchase a pardon for you, and prevalency enough in his intercession, to procure and apply it to you.

Object. " But I have often slighted the gospel-offer, and trampled on this precious blood: With what confidence can I lay claim to it?"

Ans. Since Christ doth not exclude you, you ought not to exclude yourself; but should reckon that you have the greater need to hasten to this blood, the more heinous that your sins be? Yea, you have a peculiar ground to plead upon for pardon on that account. See how David pleads it, Psal xxv. 11. *Pardon mine iniquity*, why? *for it is great.* This would be a strange argument with men, *pardon my crime, for it is great*; but it is a strong argument with God. *Lord, it is great*, and so I have the more need of pardon: *It is great*, and so thou wilt have the greater honour in pardoning me, even as a physician hath in curing a desperate disease. The sinning against Christ's blood, or slighting it, is indeed a very heinous sin; but the more it is so, you have the more need to hasten to this blood, as the only fountain that can wash away the guilt of trampling it, and this, indeed, can do it effectually: Nay, though you had actually shed this blood, as the Jews did, yet, if you be humbled for it, you are welcome to come to it for mercy. Observe that commission which Christ gave to his apostles, Luke xxiv. 46. 47. where he orders them to *preach repentance and remission in his name to all nations, and begin* (saith he) *at Jerusalem.* O, might they say, why at Jerusalem? To be sure it is not our part to begin

gin there, where they mocked, and pierced, and crucified thee the Lord of glory. Nay, says he, begin there, for these miserable wretches have most need of my blood to wash them. If any thing could alienate Christ's heart from sinners, the consideration of their crucifying of him, and using him so despitefully, might have done it: Yet, says he, go make offer of my blood and mercy to these my murderers; accordingly, it was done by Peter, Acts ii. and many of them got this blood applied to them.

Object. "But as my sins are grievous in their nature, so they are vast in their number: They are even like the sand by the sea-shore, both weighty and without number."

Anf. Remember the merits of Christ's blood is infinite, but the number of thy sins is not so; nay, though they were ten thousand times more than they are, they could not stop the current of this everflowing and overflowing fountain. Though the sands be many and large, yet the sea can overflow them all; so, though thy sins be very numerous and extensive, yet the sea of Christ's blood can cover them all, and hide them from the sight of God, so as they shall never again appear, or rise up against you in judgment.

Object. "But my sins are not only grievous in their nature, and vast in their number; but they are of very long continuance: I am an old rotten sinner, long have I lien in the grave of sin: Surely Christ will never accept of me."

Anf. Your sins may be old, yet they are not so old as Christ's mercies, which are from everlasting. It is not the first old distemper that Christ hath cured; he raised Lazarus with a word, that had lien four days in the grave; he stopt a bloody issue with the hem of his garment, that had run twelve years; he loosed a poor woman, that satan had bound eighteen years; he cured an impotent man, that had an infirmity thirty-eight years: And, can he not as easily cure all your distempers? He received those that came in at the eleventh

hour, yea, ſaved ſome at the laſt hour, particularly the thief on the croſs, whom the devil thought he was ſure of, having drawn him the length of the mouth of hell, juſt ready to caſt him in; yet, even then, upon his looking to Chriſt, did the arms of mercy catch hold of him.

What more canſt thou object, O ſinner? Hath not Chriſt provided anſwers to all thou canſt ſay, either againſt thyſelf or him? Hath he not given unanſwerable demonſtration of his ability, fulneſs, fitneſs, and willingneſs to be thy Saviour? Hath he not given full proof of his earneſt deſire to ſave thee, by the many methods he takes to prevail with ſinners to accept of him? Will not all the pains he hath hitherto taken, prevail with thy obſtinate heart? What more would you have Chriſt to do with unwilling ſinners? There is yet one ſtep further he makes, and that is a very low one: He even, as it were, turns a humble ſupplicant to thee, and upon his bare knees beſeeches thee to be reconciled to him. Read 2 Cor. v. 20. "We are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us; we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconciled to God." O wonderful condeſcenſion! Behold divine mercy kneeling down to a ſinner in the humbleſt poſture, with wringed hands and watry cheeks, importuning the ſinner to receive his Saviour, accept of pardon, ſave his ſoul, and be reconciled to God in Chriſt. Be aſtoniſhed, O heavens! Shall the Sovereign Creator turn ſupplicant to the vile traitor, and follow him with intreaties! And, O ſinner! Will thy ſtubborn heart be able to refuſe peace, or ſlight the bleſſed peace-maker Jeſus Chriſt, after all pains? If all his arguments prevail nothing, yet one would think that the humble intreaties of the great God would certainly do it. How can you reſiſt theſe?

Object. "I have no ſtrength to come to Chriſt, I cannot believe of myſelf, I have a dead bound up heart, and I cannot help it."

Anſ. 1. Canſt thou ſay in good earneſt, that thou art willing and deſirous to embrace a Saviour, if thou waſt able!

ible! Alas! it is here that it ſticks; whatever you pretend, you are not truly willing. It is our unwillingneſs that ruins us: It is not ſo much for want of power (though indeed we want it) as want of will, that ſinners want Chriſt: Were you once willing, ſtrength would not be wanting. O to get the will conquered, and made to ſurrender to Chriſt! Then the day were won: O for one pull more from the *Omnipotent Grace*, to make you "a willing people in the day of his power!"

2. Labour for a deep ſenſe of thy own impotency; take your dead heart and lay it before God, and lye groaning in Chriſt's way, and plead for pity. It is true, God is not bound, in ſtrict juſtice, to hear an unbeliever's prayer; but, if you be earneſt with him, you may expect he will do it out of his great goodneſs and mercy. "He hears the ravens when they cry:" O, then, cry to him to your utmoſt ability, in a deep ſenſe of want; be as earneſt ſeeking faith as your daily bread; cry as fervently for the life of your ſouls, as ye would do for the life of your bodies, if ready to be executed: If ye would do ſo, God would not deny you. More particularly, plead thoſe things:

(1.) Take your bible, and kneel down, and caſt up that gracious free promiſe, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 27. Read it, and plead it; put thy finger to it, and put the maker of it to his word; lay thy dead heart before it, and look up and cry, "Lord, make good this word to me, is it not a free promiſe?" There is no condition required of me for getting it fulfilled, but to enquire at thee for doing it, verſe 37. Now, Lord, I am come to enquire and requeſt thee to do it.

(2.) Humbly plead thy own impotency, and the inſufficiency of all others to help thee in this ſtate. This was the impotent man's plea with Chriſt at the pool of Bethesda, John v. 6. 7. It had good ſucceſs with him, and ſo may it have with you. Say, Lord, I have lain many years with this dead plagued heart beſide the open fountain of thy blood, that has ſaved many in my condition: I am impotent, and unable to move to it of myſelf, and have none to put me in: I have tried others, but I find it altogether in vain: Ordinances cannot do it, ſacraments

ſacraments cannot do it, the loudeſt knocks or call will not do it: Thou, Lord, muſt put to thy helping hand, or it cannot be done, for it is a work peculiar to thy almighty arm. I have been looking to all airths for help, but, Lord, there is none in heaven or earth but thee alone: Every one of the creatures, means, and ordinances ſay, it is not in me: Every one of the ſaints and angels ſay, as the king of Iſrael did to that poor ſtarving woman, 2 King vi. 27. "If the Lord do not help thee, whence ſhall I help thee?" So if thou, Lord, help me not, I muſt periſh.

(3.) In a deep ſenſe of your own impotency, flee to God's power, and plead it. Do you feel the Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir of your own corruptions ſwelling within you? Say with Jehoſhaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 12. "We have no might againſt this great company, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee." If you could win this length, then were there good ground of hope; for, when we ſee that we are wholly helpleſs and ſhiftleſs in ourſelves, then God's help is neareſt: "When I am weak (ſaith the apoſtle, 2 Cor. xii. 10.) then am I ſtrong." Renounce, then, all help in the creature, and look to the Creator: Say, Lord, though it be impoſſible with man, yet thou haſt told me, Mark x. 17. "That with thee all things are poſſible:" Though I may deſpair of all help in myſelf and others, yet thou haſt forbid me to deſpair of help in thee, therefore I flee to thee alone. "Lord, give what thou commandeſt, and then command what thou wilt."

(4.) Plead thy extreme need of Chriſt, and of faith to give thee an intereſt in him. The world cannot tell thee, O ſinner, how great thy need is: There is not a ſtarving man that needs meat, a wounded man that needs a phyſician, a ſhipwrecked man that needs a plank, a dying man with the hive-rattling in his throat, that needs breath ſo much as thou needeſt Chriſt. What wilt thou do on a death-bed, or at a tribunal, without an intereſt in him? And, what will become of thee to all eternity? Go to him, then, and ſeek faith in Chriſt, as a malefactor going to die would do his life: Fall down

down at his feet and cry, Give me faith and ſtrength to carry me to Chriſt's blood, or elſe I die. I may live without friends, wealth, honours, and pleaſures; but I cannot live without faith. I am loſt, undone, a dead man, and I periſh for ever without it. Lord, deny me what thou wilt, but deny me not faith. It had been better for me never to have been born, than to live without Chriſt, and an intereſt in him: If I win not to the fountain of Chriſt's blood, I will ſink eternally in that ſcalding lake of fire and brimſtone: If I go to Chriſt's table without faith, I will ſhed his blood, and eat and drink my own damnation.

(5.) Plead with God, how eaſy it is for him to help thee; cry with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxx. 1. "O thou that dwelleſt between the cherubims, ſhine forth:" It will coſt thee no more pains to work faith in me, and do all that I deſire, than doth the *Sun to ſhine forth*: Yea, thou canſt more eaſily put forth thy power and grace, than the ſun can dart out its beams. It is no trouble or loſs to the ſun to ſhine forth; ſo neither will it be to thee to ſhew thy power and mercy: A look or touch from thee would do it; a little thing will ſave a drowning man: Lord, ſuffer me not to periſh, when it is ſo eaſy for thee to prevent it. Were it any loſs or trouble for God to help us, we might well doubt of it; but, ſince it is none, we may cry with hope, Lord, grant ſuch an hungry beggar an alms out of the ocean of thy bounty; for thou wilt never miſs it. As the ſun, the more it ſhines, diſplays its glory the more; ſo thou wilt gain glory by putting forth thy power to help ſuch a helpleſs creature as I am.

Object. "But I have often looked and cried to him for help, but alas, I am ſuch a grievous ſinner, he doth not anſwer me, unleſs it be with a frown."

Anſ. 1. It may be there is ſome idol or ſin ſtill harboured, that thou art not willing to part with. This may be the Achan in the camp, that cauſed the Lord to hide his face: Search for it, and caſt out the accurſed thing: "Let not thine eye pity it, neither do thou ſpare it." If thou canſt not find it, go humbly to God and cry,

cry, "Shew me, Lord, wherefore thou contendeſt with me."

2. It may be thou art not fervent enough; God keeps the door bolted, that you may be provoked to knock the harder, Mat. vii. 7. "Aſk, and it ſhall be given you: ſeek, and you ſhall find: knock, and it ſhall be opened to you." In which one verſe, Chriſt gives you three calls to fervency and importunity in prayer, each ſtronger than another; *aſk*, *ſeek*, *knock*. The woman of Canaan readily took up the meaning of Chriſt's refuſing to anſwer her; ſhe turns the more fervent and importunate, and ſo gets all her will.

3. Reſolve, whatever diſcouragement you meet with, you will never quit the throne of grace, but you will always lay yourſelf in Chriſt's way, and never look to another for help; yea, that you will die waiting on him. Remember the Pſalmiſt's experience, Pſal. xl. 1. "I waited patiently for the Lord, and at length he inclined his ear, and heard my cry." There was never any yet that waited on him, had cauſe to be aſhamed. You may meet with many diſcouragements and temptations, and be put to very ſad thoughts; but you muſt be reſolute in looking to Chriſt for help, come what will: And, in imitation of the *four lepers at the ſiege of Samaria*, reaſon with yourſelf, if I live at a diſtance from Chriſt, I'll infallibly periſh, there is no hope for me: If Chriſt pity me not when I am waiting on him, I ſhall but periſh; but yet there is hope, he will have pity at length: Therefore, if I periſh, I'll periſh at Chriſt's footſtool, looking up to him, where never one yet periſhed, and I hope he will not let me be the firſt.

4. Make uſe of arguments in pleading with him.

(1.) Plead the freeneſs of his mercy. It needs no motive, and expects no worth; but, "whoſoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely." It runs freely, ſo that mountains cannot ſtop the current of it, more than rocks can ſtop the ebbing and flowing of the ſea. Indeed, Lord, if ſin and unworthineſs could ſtop mercy, I might deſpair, for I am as unworthy a creature as ever the ſun ſhined upon; but, bleſſed be God, grace is free.

(2.)

(2.) Plead Christ's commission, Isa. lxi. 1. He was sent "to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound." Lord, here is a poor prisoner, a frozen, locked, bound-up heart: Here is employment for thee: Loose me, knock off my fetters, and "bring my soul out of prison. Thou hast all fulness dwelling in thee, and thou hast it given thee to bestow on such miserable objects as I am; Lord, here is a naked back for thee to cover, and an empty stomach for thee to fill, a wounded soul for thee to cure. "Lord, thou camest to seek and to save that which was lost;" and, wilt thou not be found of a lost sinner that is seeking thee?

(3.) Plead the communicativeness of his mercy to others. He had compassion upon mens bodies while he was on earth, even the bodies of wicked men, such as the unthankful lepers; he let none of them go without healing, that came to him. Say, Lord, didst thou shew so much compassion to diseased bodies, and wilt thou not have some pity on my dying soul, that is far more precious than carcases of clay? Plead his compassion that he hath shewed to the worst of sinners, such as Manasseh, Mary Magdalene, Paul, and those who murdered him.—Plead his compassion towards the finally obstinate and impenitent, such as Jerusalem, over which he wept, Luke xix. Lord, did thy heart melt with pity to such, and wilt thou not pity a humbled sinner, that confesseth his sin, and would fain be reconciled to God? Is not mercy the work thou delightest in? Mic. vii. 18.

Lastly, Labour for a sense of the misery of a Christless state, of your great need of Christ, and of the happiness of being *found in him*: And, in a sense thereof, look to Christ, and make a mint to take hold of him. Stir up yourself to it, and rest your soul on him as you can, and God will help you, and communicate strength. He will not fail to notice and encourage an honest mint, Jer. xxx. 21. "Who is this that engageth his heart to approach to me?" He will pity and help such. Try, O poor soul, if you can get a grip of Christ, especially upon a sacrament occasion, when you are nearer him

than at other times; If you cannot apply Chriſt to yourſelf, and ſay, he is mine; yet apply yourſelf to Chriſt, and ſay, *I would fain be thine*, yea, I am reſolved to be thine. Go forth to Chriſt with all the faith you can win at; ſay, with the poor man, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." You muſt not ſit ſtill and do nothing, but uſe all means in your power; for it is in the uſe of thoſe that God works faith: Hoiſe up the ſails, and wait for the gales.

DIRECT. XI. Come and join yourſelves unto the Lord, in a perpetual and perſonal Covenant, before you go to his Table.

UNLESS you be within the covenant of grace, you have no right to the ſeal of the covenant; now, if ye would be found within the covenant, you muſt, by faith, take hold of the covenant, and heartily go in with the gracious terms and contrivance of it. And this is what we commonly call perſonal covenanting with God. And the more expreſs and diſtinct we are in this matter, we will have the more comfort.

As for the nature, neceſſity, and manner of perſonal covenanting, I refer the reader to my Sacramental Catechiſm, from p. 118. to 136. *(firſt Edit.)* where this ſubject is largely handled.

Perſonal covenanting is the communicant's beſt token, and without it you cannot warrantably come to the Lord's table. You will mock God, and deceive your own ſouls, if you take the great ſeal of heaven, and append it to a blank, or a ſheet of clean paper: And this you do, when you communicate without previous covenanting with God. O beware of appending heaven's ſeal to a blank, leſt the King of heaven be wroth, and fill up the blank with a curſe.

O communicant, come then, take hold of the covenant of grace, and give a hearty and fiducial conſent to its gracious offers and terms. You are miſerable while under a covenant of works; be convinced of it, and ſpeedily betake yourſelves to the new covenant, and the gracious

gracious method of ſalvation through Jeſus Chriſt and his righteouſneſs. Cordially accept of Jeſus Chriſt in all his offices, and in him make choice of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, as your God and portion: And give up yourſelves, ſoul and body, and all you have, to be the Lord's, to be for him and not for another. And, in Chriſt's ſtrength, engage to live for God, ſerve him, and walk with him in newneſs of life. Do all this in the moſt ſolemn manner, with ſincerity, humility, and ſelf-denial; and, if this you be helped to do, God will accept of you at his table, and deal with you as his covenanted people.

Object. "But, ſaith one, I know it is my duty to come and tranſact with God in this manner, and renew covenant with him, conform to my baptiſmal vows; and ſometimes I think I am willing to do it, but I much ſuſpect my ſincerity in this matter; and it is highly dangerous to deal falſly with God, in pretending to covenant with him, when the heart is not right with God?"

Anſ. You have juſt cauſe to ſuſpect your own hearts, and therefore ſhould be at all pains to ſearch and try yourſelves; and, for your help, I ſhall give ſome characters of thoſe who aim ſincerely to tranſact and renew covenant with God.

1. They are ſuch who are throughly convinced of their miſery under the firſt covenant, as being wholly unable to fulfil its condition, or pay its penalty; and therefore ſee they cannot abide in this caſe, without being undone to all eternity.

2. They are heartily grieved for their natural eſtrangement, and long living at a diſtance from God; and are made to ſay, Oh, how long have I dwelt in Meſech, far from the fountain of my happineſs!

3. They are troubled for their long ſlighting of Chriſt's gracious calls and offers of mercy in the goſpel, and for the backwardneſs of their hearts to leave ſin and ſatan, and come and enter into covenant with God. Oh, how long have I preferred ſatan's drudgery and ſervice, to God's friendſhip and favour; lived in league with my ſoul's enemy, and at war with my beſt friend!

4. They have ſomething of a ſoul affecting view of the new covenant, and the new way and method of ſalvation contained therein. They ſee there is no righteouſneſs of man or angel that can juſtify them, none but the righteouſneſs of Chriſt alone, nothing but an infinite ſatisfaction can do their turn; and it is their cry, *None but Chriſt.*

5. They are fully reſolved on a rupture and breach with all the enemies of God, and to break all leagues and covenants with ſin, ſatan, and the world; and that they will never be ſlaves to them as formerly: They heartily agree with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. cxix. 115. "Depart from me, ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God."

6. They are ſenſible of, and humbled for, the former treachery and falſe-dealing of their hearts with God. Are there not many who have formerly entered into covenant with God, have ſworn allegiance to him as their Sovereign, and that not only at baptiſm, but have renewed this deed at the Lord's ſupper? But may not the Lord take up the ſame complaint againſt them, as againſt Iſrael? Pſal. lxxviii. 36. 37. "They lied to him with their tongues; for their hearts were not right with him, neither were they ſtedfaſt in his covenant." Well, if you be deeply affected on this account, the Lord will not reject you.

7. They ſincerely accept of Chriſt as their Surety and Cautioner before God; they eſteem him altogether lovely, and infinitely precious. They renounce their own *righteouſneſs* in juſtification, and their own *ſtrength* in ſanctification, and look to Chriſt for both, ſaying, as thoſe, Iſa. xlv. 24. "In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength." I have not ſufficiency of myſelf, either to make or keep covenant with God, but my confidence is entirely in Chriſt my all-ſufficient Surety.

8. They are content to give themſelves to the Lord, and all they are and have. Faith hath two hands; by the one it receives Jeſus Chriſt, and by the other it gives the ſoul to him. Now, if your faith want either of theſe, it is lame.

9. They feel in-dwelling ſin as a grievous clog; they deſire

deſire heart-holineſs more than any earthly thing, and reſolve, through grace, upon more care and watchfulneſs againſt ſin than formerly.

Now, try your ſincerity in covenanting with God by theſe marks, and if you can lay claim to one or more of them, then you are not hypocrites, nor of the number of thoſe who give God the hand without the heart; who pretend to make a covenant with God, and yet keep a ſecret league with the devil, the world, and the fleſh, who profeſs a great outward reſpect to God and his ways, and yet keep a ſecret antipathy to Godlineſs, as, alas, many do, who come to the Lord's table.

And, if you would manage this weighty tranſaction aright, you muſt be very deliberate in it: Take many a view of the nature and frame of the covenant of grace, and conſider what God offers and promiſes therein, and what he doth require of us; and endeavour to get your hearts wrought up to a chearful compliance therewith. Your ſouls are at the ſtake, and a miſtake here ruins you eternally; but, if once it be well done, it is done for ever. This bargain is not for a ſhort term, but for life, nay, for eternity; and therefore you ſhould count the coſt of it, and conſider it duly; and be reſolved, whatever trouble or perſecution ſhall ariſe, or whatever temptation you may meet with to leave Chriſt, to ſay to them, like Ruth to Naomi, when ſhe was ſtedfaſtly reſolved to go with her, Ruth i. 16. *Intreat me not to leave Chriſt; for where he goes, I will follow him, though it were into baniſhment: Where he lodges, I will lodge, though it were in a priſon: For neither death nor life ſhall part Chriſt and me.*

And, again, beware of delays of making or entering into covenant with God. It is a work for eternity, and therefore requires preſent diſpatch. The time of youth is a rare ſeaſon for this work, and ought carefully to be improven, and no time loſt. And here I ſhall addreſs myſelf to the young.

O young people, and ye that never communicated before, ſet about this work of perſonal covenanting, before you approach to the Lord's table. Do not delay or put off to another year, or till old age or ſickneſs come

come on: For, what do you know but God may be provoked to harden your hearts ſo in old age (though ye ſhould live till that time) that ye ſhall have no liking to religion and the ways of God? Muſt it not be highly diſpleaſing to God, to reſerve for him the refuſe and dregs of your ſtrength and time? Will you give your Creator and Redeemer only ſo much of your time and ſtrength as the devil and the world have left? O, what is this, but to offer the blind and the lame of the flock in ſacrifice to God, Malachi i. 7. which is an abomination!

O young folk, can you diſpoſe of yourſelves better in the days of your youth, than give up yourſelves to the Lord? When you are ready to chuſe callings and ſettlements in the world, can ye take a wiſer courſe, than firſt chuſe a ſettlement in Chriſt's family, which would make all other conditions and circumſtances of life the more comfortable to you? Now, the way to be made a member of this family, is by the covenanting with God: Without this, you have no right to the childrens bread, nor the ſeals of the covenant. It is not enough that you were baptized, and are Chriſtians by your parents dedication, unleſs you be Chriſtians by your own free choice and conſent. Remember, you are now to enter into the ſtate of adult church membership, and to be admitted to ſhare of the childrens privileges ſealed to you in baptiſm; and, therefore, now ye muſt act as rational men and women, and make a choice for yourſelves: You ought perſonally and explicitly to renew your baptiſmal covenant, and ratifying your parents deed, now when you are of age; otherwiſe your baptiſm and parents dedication will not profit you. I call you to engage to no more here, than what you are already obliged to by your baptiſm; for it is juſt the ſame covenant you are to enter into now, that ye have already conſented to by your baptiſm: Only, by your perſonal reſignation, voluntary conſent, and taking the ſecond ſeal of the covenant, you are to bind yourſelves the faſter to it; the which if you neglect to do, your baptiſm will be ſo far from profiting you, that it will be a witneſs againſt you, and cry for vengeance on you, and you will be

in no better condition than the heathens that never were baptized.

O young communicants, take heed to your firſt communicating; for very much doth depend upon it. You are now as it were to lay the foundation-ſtone of your ſalvation-work, and this ought to be done with much ſpiritual ſkill and knowledge, if you would have a ſure building. O then dig deep, and found your houſe, your ſalvation, your hopes of heaven, upon the rock Chriſt, by perſonal covenanting, and expreſs cloſing with him upon the terms of grace: For if you do it not, but approach to the Lord's table in ignorance, unbelief, or hardneſs of heart, you may provoke God to ſmite you with judicial blindneſs and obduration, and give you up to ſuch heart-hardneſs and formality in duty, as may cleave to you all your lives long, and ſo you are ruined for ever. The time of your firſt communicating, is a moſt critical juncture for your ſouls; for, according to the ſtate, frame, and diſpoſition of peoples ſouls, at their firſt communicating, ſo it very often fares with them in ſome meaſure at all the reſt of the communions they partake of. Many have found this, ſome to their ſweet, others to their ſad experience. Some, by their careleſs approach at firſt, and neglecting expreſsly to covenant with God, have drawn down the plagues of heart-hardneſs and formality upon themſelves, and provoked God to leave them to wander in the dark all their days, without any ſolid aſſurance, or comfortable view of their intereſt in Chriſt and the covenant of grace. But others, by means of their ſincere preparation and covenanting with God at this time, have got a ſeal of their converſion, and a view of their intereſt in Chriſt, which hath proven very uſeful and comfortable to them all the reſt of their lives, and eſpecially in the time of diſtreſs, and when on a death-bed. Then they have remembered, how that at ſuch a time and place they joined themſelves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, and then and there God ſpake with them, intimated their pardon, and owned them as his covenanted children. As their ſouls were helped to ſay to the Lord, *Thou art my God:* So God ſaid to them, *I am your ſalvation.* And hereby many have been

been ſtrengthened, when ready to faint under doubts and diſcouragements. Therefore, O young communicants, as ye regard the well-being of your precious and immortal ſouls for ever, look well to yourſelves at this time; if matters be right with you now, they will never be altogether wrong afterwards. Labour to get ſome diſtinct uptakings of the covenant of grace, and of the nature, ends, and uſes of this ſolemn ordinance, which is the compend and ſeal of it, before your firſt partaking; pray fervently for knowledge and ſpiritual illumination; apply to Jeſus Chriſt, your great Prophet, for this, and ſee to improve the means and helps which he is pleaſed to afford you for it. Retire for meditation and reading of the bible; read and meditate much on the ſufferings of Chriſt; read our Confeſſion of Faith; Vincent's Catechiſm, Guthrie's Trial of a ſaving intereſt in Chriſt, Doolittle, and other good books on the ſacrament, that ye may attain to ſome right impreſſions of the covenant, and the Lord's ſupper; and particularly, of the obligations you already lie under by the firſt ſeal of baptiſm; and then, under a humble ſenſe of guilt, and with a hopeful view of the goſpel-offer, go with all ſerioufneſs and ſolemnity, and renew thoſe engagements; enter into covenant with God, and next come to his table, to get the tranſaction ſealed and ratified, by getting the other ſeal of heaven appended to it.

And now, young people, I put it to your choice, as Joſhua did to the Iſraelites, Joſ. xxiv. 15. "Chooſe you this day whom you will ſerve." Make choice at this time whom ye will be ſaved by, and whom ye will obey. Whom will you have for your maſter, whether Chriſt or the devil? Both are courting your hearts; which of them will you yield to? Lay your hands on your hearts, and ſee whether you will grant Chriſt's or the devil's deſire? Whether ſhall the devil have you, ſoul and body, to all eternity, or ſhall Chriſt have you? Oh, will any be ſo fooliſh as halt betwixt two opinions in this caſe; any ſo mad as ſtand in doubt whether to be ſaved or damned, whether to live with Chriſt or the devil for ever? Now Michael and his angels, and the Dragon and his

his angels are fighting about your hearts; the devil is holding, and a dying Saviour is drawing: O, will you not be on Chriſt's ſide, and wiſh Michael may prevail, that the red dragon's head may be broken, that the devil may get a total defeat, and that Chriſt may get your hearts for ever? Remember, Chriſt will have none but willing ſervants, Pſal. cx. 3. none but thoſe who freely offer themſelves unto the Lord. Amaziah the ſon of Zichri, is recorded with great honour, 2 Chron. xvii. 16. becauſe "he willingly offered himſelf unto the Lord." O for many Amaziahs, many ſuch free-will offerings, among young communicants. It would be a moſt pleaſant ſight to God and miniſters, to ſaints and angels, whoſe eyes are upon you. The firſt-fruits under the law were to be offered to the Lord. "The kindneſs of youth is much remembred by him," Jer. ii. Young folks praying, repenting, and covenanting, are moſt melodious muſic in his ears. O, give Chriſt the firſt and beſt of your days, for he well deſerves this. Make earneſt of covenanting-work in ſecret, that the communion-day may be a day of your eſpouſal to the Lord Jeſus, and the marriage-knot may be caſt ſo ſure at this table, that death nor hell may never be able to looſe it.

Need I uſe any motives to preſs you to make this bargain, which is ſo advantageous for your ſouls? God invites you to treat with him, nay, he ſummons you to do it, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. "Yield yourſelves to the Lord," ſtrike hands with God, ſubmit to his mercy, accept of the terms of grace. O, that God himſelf would ſound an alarm in your ears, and ſhew you the miſery of an unconverted ſtate!

1. While you are in this ſtate, you have no intereſt in Chriſt, no ſhare in his blood or purchaſe; you have neither art nor part in the God of Iſrael, Eph. ii. 12.

2. You are under a covenant of works, and the power, terror, threatning, and curſes of a broken law. The ſentence of death is pronounced againſt you, and you may look for the execution of it every moment.

3. While you are out of the covenant, you have no right to any mercy, and all the mercies you receive are

curſed to you, and you know not how ſoon God may ſtrip you of all you have.

4. Conſider what a ſad ſtroke death gives to an uncovenanted ſoul. It deprives him of all mercies, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal, at one blow; and ſets him agoing for ever. And whither can you flee in the day of viſitation, when nothing but grim horror and deſpair do ſtare you in the face? When the body is on the brink of the grave, and the ſoul is on the brink of hell, how will you have confidence to cry to an uncovenanted God, to whom you have been ſtrangers all your days? Muſt it not be terrible for an uncovenanted ſoul to think, I am going to appear before that God I do not know, have no intereſt in, nor acquaintance with Can I look for friendſhip from him now, ſince I never fought after it before? But, on the contrary, how pleaſant then will it be for a covenanted ſoul to look death in the face, who can ſay, *I know whom I have believed*, and I know whither I am going: *The place I know, the way I know*, and the God of that land I know? Why ſhould I be backward to go to my covenanted friend, with whom I have oft converſed, been long acquainted, and in whoſe preſence I have placed my happineſs?

5. Conſider how lamentable your caſe will be for evermore, if you ſlight the preſent opportunity: The treaty will not always laſt with you, nay, the day is not far off when it ſhall end, and God will treat with you no longer. The door will be eternally ſhut, and God will become inacceſſible, inexorable, irreconcileable, for evermore: Chriſt, the bleſſed Mediator, will become thy implacable Judge; and, how will you look him in the face, when on the throne, whom you ſo baſely ſlighted at a communion-table? What wilt thou do when thou findeſt thyſelf ſhut up under flaming wrath, without hope? The remembrance of loſt opportunies will be as oil to thy flames. *Time was, when God treated, and would have made a bargain with me, but I would not*: this will be the burden of thy eternal lamentation. O, how will you be able to bear the wrath of an uncovenanted God! Who can dwell with devouring fire? A ſmall ſhower of fire and brimſtone lighting on our heads

now

now, would be very terrible. But O, it will be infinitely more ſo, when it ſhall be poured down in whole ſtreams, and that not for a time, but for ever and ever. Will not ten thouſand years ſuffering do the turn? No, no; it will be eternal. Well, if you be able to dwell with everlaſting burnings, you need not treat with God: But O, *it is fearful to fall into the hands of the living God*, one that lives, and will for ever live, to revenge himſelf upon you!

Hard muſt your hearts be, if they be not moved by theſe threatenings; but yet harder muſt they be, if they be not melted by God's condeſcending intreaties. Hear him, Iſa. lv. 1. 2. 3. "Ho, every one that thirſteth, Come, &c. Incline your ear, and come unto me; Hear, and your ſoul ſhall live, and I will make an everlaſting covenant with you." Is God ſo willing to make a covenant with his creature, a ſlave, a worm; and are you not willing to caſt down the weapons of rebellion, and enter into a league with? Is it not a bargain moſt ſuitable for you, and all your circumſtances and neceſſities? Is it not moſt glorious and honourable for you to be betrothed to ſo great a prince? Hoſ. ii. 19. Is it not rich and advantageous for you, to be infeft in ſo great an inheritance, and to have a ſealed right to ſuch bleſſed privileges as a free pardon, gracious acceſs, covenant-proviſion, covenant protection, and covenant-comforts?

Object. "Alas, I have made a perſonal covenant before, but have broke it."

Anſ. You have cauſe to be humbled for it before God; and if you be not, it is a bad ſign indeed. 2. All ſenſible and mourning backſliders are invited to return to him, and renew their covenant, Jer iii. endeavour to make the bargain ſurer than you did before.

Object. "I am afraid of breaking it over again: And is it not better not to engage?"

Anſ. 1. It is good to be jealous of yourſelves, and feared for breaking; for, the more you diſtruſt your own ſtrength, the ſtronger you are.

2. If you covenant honeſtly, you will get covenant-grace and ſtrength which ſhall be ſufficient for you; you will get the dominion of ſin broke, and power to wreſtle againſt it: And, above all, you will get Chriſt engaged for you as your ſurety; and, to be ſure, though you be weak, he is able enough.

DIRECT. XII. Labour for a thorough cleanſing of both Heart and Life from Sin, and turn unto the Lord in the ways of new obedience, before you come to the Lord's Table.

ALL that would attend a holy God, and expect a communion with him in this holy ordinance, muſt ſee to have pure hearts and clean hands, Pſal. xxiv. 3. 4. Jam. iv. 8. What was David's pious reſolution, Pſal. xxvi. 6. ought to be yours at this occaſion, "I will waſh my hands in innocency, and ſo will I compaſs thine altar, O Lord." He alludes to the ceremony of the prieſts waſhing at the brazen laver, before they miniſtered at the altar; to let us ſee, that though this ceremony belonged only to the prieſts, yet the morality belongs to all; and there is a waſhing which concerns all before they meddle with holy ſervices, and eſpecially ſuch as the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper. There is a double waſhing required of all communicants: 1. A waſhing of yourſelves in Chriſt's blood by the actings of faith. 2. A waſhing of yourſelves by the exerciſe of true repentance and reformation, which is an effect of the former; by the one, the guilt of ſin is taken away, and by the other, the filth of ſin is removed.

Now, this cleanſing muſt be both external and internal, more than the outſide of the cup and platter muſt be waſhed, for God looks principally to the heart. Obſerve thoſe parts of the ſacrifice, that in a ſpecial manner behoved to be waſhed under the law, Lev. i. 9. "But the inwards and his legs ſhall he waſh in water." Now, why ſhould the inwards and legs of the ſacrifice be waſhed above all the reſt? Becauſe the intrails contained

tained the excrements of the beaſt, and the legs and the feet did tread in the mire and puddle, and ſo thoſe parts were more defiled than any other part of the body. And all this to teach us, that when we draw near to God in ſolemn worſhip, we ſhould eſpecially waſh there, where moſt filth is likely to be contracted.

1*ſt*, Our *inwards*, our hearts and conſciences, muſt be waſhed: O what filth and excrements, even a dunghill of filthy luſts, lye there! Jer. iv. 14. "O Jeruſalem, waſh thine heart from wickedneſs, how long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within thee?" O communicants, you muſt look well to the inwards at this time, and ſee to get all inward and ſecret luſts waſhed out by repentance, and ſtrong reſolutions in Chriſt's ſtrength againſt them.

2*dly*, Our *legs and feet* muſt be waſhed alſo. The ſteps of our daily converſation are defiled by walking and treading in foul ways: Oh, how much pollution do even believers gather by the ſteps of their daily walk! And hence it is, that he who is already waſhed, needs daily, and upon every new occaſion, to have his feet waſhed, John xii. 10. We ſhould then be in earneſt, before we come to the Lord's table, to have all the defilement of our outward actions waſhed away by true repentance, and reformation of life. Alas, that we ſhould come to this holy table with ſuch inwards, and with ſuch feet, as many times we have! "Lord, purge us with hyſſop, and we ſhall be whiter than the ſnow." Our own waſhing will not do it, if Chriſt put not to his hand; yet we muſt be ſincerely uſing the means, and waiting for the help of his Spirit.

If you would be ſuitably prepared for this ſolemn ordinance, and have a gracious meeting with Chriſt at his table, you muſt not only ſearch out your ſins, be deeply humbled for them, make confeſſion of them before the Lord, and by faith lay hold on Chriſt for pardon, as before directed; but you muſt alſo be waſhen and cleanſed from ſin, forſake ſin in your life, and caſt it out of your heart: For, if you come to Chriſt's table with any of his enemies and traitors lodged in your boſoms, with any of your old luſts unmortified, and ſins

not

not put away, he will look upon you as his murderers, and ſmite you with his judgments; yea, you may expect that the wrath of God will come upon you whilſt the bread is in your mouths, as it did upon Iſrael for the ſame reaſon, Pſal. lxxviii. 30. 31. "They were not eſtranged from their luſts; but whilſt the meat was in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and ſlew the fatteſt of them, and ſmote down the choſen men of Iſrael" Perhaps, O ſinner, thou mayeſt not feel this wrath at the time, but it may be inflicted inſenſibly on thy ſoul; and every ſacrament thou receiveſt in this condition, thou doſt heap and treaſure up wrath againſt the day of wrath; and every time thou bringeſt a new faggot to the heap, which will make a terrible fire at laſt, when it is thoroughly kindled againſt thy ſoul.

O, then, you who deſign to approach to the Lord's table, be perſuaded to put a bill of divorce into the hands of all your luſts and idols; *Caſt away all your former tranſgreſſions*, and begin a new life: Reſolutely turn your back on ſins, ſatan, and hell; and come take on with a new maſter, and engage in God's ſtrength to be good ſervants and faithful ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt for the time to come. If you do this, God promiſeth you mercy and pardon, and that your former ſins ſhall not ſo much as be mentioned to you, Iſa. lv. 7. Ezek. xviii. 21. 22. But, if you do not, ſevere wrath is threatened, Pſal. lxviii. 21.

The ſacrament doth work and produce effects, according to the ſtate and diſpoſition of the receivers thereof; as the *water of jealouſy* did to the woman under ſuſpicion of uncleanneſs, Numb. v. 27. 28. If the woman was clean, then the water did her no hurt, nay, it did her good, made her conceive and become fruitful: But, if ſhe was defiled and unclean, it did her great miſchief; "Her belly did ſwell, her thigh did rot, and ſhe became a curſe." It is ſo in receiving the ſacrament: If a man be in a gracious ſtate, and made clean by faith, repentance, and reformation, then the ſacrament brings a bleſſing, it makes a man ſpiritually healthful and fruitful: But if he be defiled and impenitent, it doth

doth him great miſchief; like the water of jealouſy, it doth poiſon and rot his ſoul, and he proves a more rotten and wretched ſinner than before. O then, let none venture to harbour ſin, and deal falſly with God, when he comes to drink this water of jealouſy.

The Phariſees quarrelled with Chriſt, Matt. xv. 2. "Why do thy diſciples tranſgreſs the tradition of the elders? for they waſh not their hands when they eat bread." But on many better grounds may we quarrel many communicants: Why do ye tranſgreſs the commandment of the Lord? for ye waſh neither hands nor heart, when ye eat bread at the Lord's table; nay, ye preſume to dip your filthy hands into the diſh with a holy Jeſus: Do you think he will bear with ſuch an affront from vile worms, when it is more eaſy for him to cruſh you, than for you to trample a worm under your feet? Remember, he is a *God of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity.*

Would you have God to draw near to you in this holy ordinance, then cleanſe your hands and purify your hearts. *Waſh ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before his eyes, ceaſe to do evil, and learn to do well.* And, if ye would be accepted by God, your turning from ſin muſt have theſe properties:

1*ſt*, It muſt be a cordial turning with all the heart and ſoul. You muſt not forſake ſin with reluctancy, and by conſtraint, (as Phaltiel left Michael) but willingly and readily.

2*dly*, You muſt turn from your ſins preſently, and without delay. Do not adventure to lie down and ſleep with them another night, leſt your waking next day be in hell, or under a ſentence of final hardneſs or impenitency: You are not ſure the day of grace will laſt, or the door of mercy ſtand open till to-morrow.

3*dly*, You muſt turn from ſin finally and everlaſtingly; your quarrel with ſin muſt be irreconcileable: For, if now ye declare war againſt your ſins, as the traitors and murderers of your Lord and Maſter, ye muſt draw the ſword againſt them, and throw away the ſcabbard, and vow never to be ſatisfied till you revenge Chriſt's

Chriſt's death upon them, and get them utterly deſtroyed. O, never entertain a favourable thought of, nor give a kindly look to the bloody knife that killed your deareſt friend. Do not, like many, who only part with their ſins about the time of a communion, or when conſcience is awakened; but when that is over, they return with the dog to the vomit. Many ſay to their ſins, as Abraham to his ſervants, *Stay at the foot of the mount till I go up and worſhip, and I will return to you again.* You ought to ſay ſo, indeed, to your neceſſary wordly affairs at this time; but, for your ſins, you ſhould paſs an act of eternal baniſhment upon them, and ſay with Ephraim, what have I to do any more with idols?

4*thly*, You muſt turn from ſin univerſally. You muſt not, like Herod, part with many and reſerve ſome, but readily give up with all; with inward heart ſins, as well as outward and groſs ſins; with ſins of omiſſion, as well as of commiſſion, with ſecret ſins, as well as open ſins. And particularly, turn from your predominant ſins whatever they be; and from thoſe ſins that are common in the age and place wherein you live: Reſerve no ſin, nor darling luſt, but hew thy beloved Agag in pieces before the Lord; leave no grip of thy heart to the devil, leſt he pull thee to hell by it.

Turn from all tongue ſins, rotten diſcourſe and corrupt communication. You would reckon it a ſad diſeaſe to have your excrements come out at your mouth; and yet, alas, this is the diſeaſe of many. O ſwearer, turn from your ſwearing: What mean ye to ſtudy the language of hell, unleſs you would have the world believe that you deſign to travel thither! For thoſe who are to go to a ſtrange country to live, deſire to learn ſomething of the language of the country ere they go. What profit or pleaſure have you in this ſin! Why will you dare heaven and defy God's law, without any temptation? What would you ſay, if men ſhould baffle or abuſe your name, or your father's name, as you do the Lord's name!

Obj. "O, (ſay ſome,) it is only the devil's name that we baffle."

Anſ.

Anſ. There is nothing pleaſes the devil more than to have his name ſo frequently uſed; for thus you make him a god, whom you worſhip and pray to, by bidding the devil take this or that.

Object. "I do not ban or ſwear but when I am in paſſion and provoked to it."

Anſ. 1. This is an aggravation of your ſin, firſt to be in paſſion, and then to ſwear: Do you think that one ſin will excuſe another? 2. Is it juſt to flee in the face of your Creator, becauſe you are affronted by your fellow-creature? Will you ſtab your father, becauſe your enemy ſtrikes you? If a man wrong you, will you put forth your anger on God who never wronged you.

Object. "I ſwear but little oaths, by faith, conſcience," &c.

Anſ. 1. The devil would have you think theſe but little ſins now: But ſtay till a death-bed or a judgment-ſeat, and you will find him alter his note. 2. Do you think it a light matter to make a common baffle of faith, the precious inſtrument of your juſtification; or of conſcience, that is the deputy of the great God; or of your precious ſoul, that coſt the blood of Chriſt to redeem it? 3. Theſe are but creatures, and to ſwear by them is plain idolatry. For it is a giving worſhip, and aſcribing divine attributes to the creature.

O *cursers* and *swearers*, be perſuaded to forſake theſe ſins, and turn to God in Chriſt for mercy. What will God ſay to you at the great day, if you do not? You wiſhed for damnation in your ordinary diſcourſe; you are now holden at your word, and damned ſhall you be. You ſwore in your ordinary diſcourſe, therefore *God will ſwear in his wrath, you ſhall not enter into his reſt*: You could not ſpeak without curſing, therefore you ſhall be baniſhed out of God's preſence with a curſe: Their tongues, that were ſo liberal of oaths and blaſphemies, ſhall fry in endleſs and ceaſeleſs flames, without one drop of water to cool them.

Again, O *liar*, forſake your lying, and come to Chriſt. Though this ſin be common, yet conſider it is moſt abominable in the ſight of God: The devil is the patron

of this ſin, and the father of liars; it was with a lie he ruined all mankind. Ye ſhall be as gods, ſaid he to our firſt parents. There is never a lie thou makeſt, but the devil is at thine ear, and whiſpers it to thee. Remember what God did to Ananias and Sapphira for lying, Acts v. he ſtruck them dead with a lie in their mouth; and it will be a wonder of his patience, if he do not ſo to thee. Do you know, O liars, whoſe children you are? Not God's children, for they are children that will not lie; and therefore you muſt be ſatan's children, for he is a liar from the beginning, and the father of liars. Knoweſt thou, O liar, whither thou art going? Even to thy fathers. Should not children be with their father? You cannot look upward, and ſay, *Our father which art in heaven*: but thou mayeſt look downward and ſay, *Our father which art in hell*; and there it is (if thou repent not) that thy tongue ſhall be tormented in flames for ever. Tremble at this, O liar, and be aſſured it is no lie that I tell you: "Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?"

Moreover, O *drunkard*, turn from your drunkenneſs, and come to Chriſt. While you live in this ſin, you lye under many woes and curſes, Iſa. v. 11. 12. Iſa. xxviii. 2. 1 Cor. vi. 10. God's curſes are not light, therefore make not light of them: For, if ye do, O drunkard, remember what is abiding you hereafter, even a cup of red vengeance, filled up with the dregs of God's wrath, which ſhall be poured down your throat for ever; and yet you ſhall eternally cry out, *I thirſt, I thirſt*; and for all the drink you have had on earth, you cannot get there a drop of cold water to cool your tongue.

In the next place, O *covetous man*, cheater and defrauder, turn from your covetouſneſs, your injuſtice, and unrighteous gain, and come to Chriſt. If you do not, you ſhall pay dear for all your unjuſt gain in another world; "God is the avenger of all ſuch as you defraud," 1 Theſſ. iv. 6. You think yourſelf very cunning, when you can cheat your neighbour of a little money; but, know you not, that the devil in the meantime, is more cunning in cheating you of your precious ſoul, which is infinitely more valuable?

O *Sabbath-breaker*, ſecure and prayerleſs ſinner, turn from your ſins unto God and holineſs; flee to Chriſt for ſhelter from them, and the wrath due to them; righteouſneſs and redemption are only to be found in him. Would you not count him mad, who being condemned to a cruel death for baſe crimes, and might eſcape it if he would accept of a pardon ready provided for him, and leave off ſuch vile acts for the future, would yet obſtinately refuſe to do it? And, are not you yet madder, that ſlight your Saviour, and hug your luſts, when your danger is a thouſand times greater! What madneſs is it to diſhonour God, and damn your ſoul, to gratify the devil, or pleaſe a vile carcaſe, that ſhortly will be ſo lothſome, that men cannot endure it above ground?

O ſinner, I beſeech you, in the name of the great and glorious Jehovah, and in the name of our glorious Redeemer, be reconciled to God, accept of a pardon through Chriſt's blood, and engage to quit theſe ſins that would deſtroy you. Will you pleaſe God, and ſhew kindneſs to your poor ſoul by doing it? However much you have abuſed God's patience, trampled his love, ſlighted his calls, deſpiſed his threatenings, and undervalued his promiſes; yet he is ſtill ſtanding and beſeeching you to be reconciled to him. O will not all this goodneſs melt your heart, and cauſe you, with Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18. to bemoan yourſelf, and cry, 'Turn thou me, O Lord, and I ſhall be turned?" Without this turning, ſee that you venture not to this ſacred ordinance; let none with the running ulcers of ſin upon them offer to ſit down at this holy table, for God's pure eyes cannot look upon them. And if you would turn a-right, ſee that ye turn believingly to God in Chriſt: For there is no acceſs to the King of heaven, without bringing the Prince of peace, the King's Son, in your arms; no atonement without Chriſt, no acceptance but in the Beloved.

Laſtly, If you would turn to God aright, ye muſt not only turn from ſin, but alſo turn to the ways of holineſs and new obedience. It is not enough to ceaſe to do evil, but you muſt alſo learn to do well. Some do part with their ſins of commiſſion, but continue ſtill in ſins of omiſ-

ſion; they leave their groſs out-breakings, but ſtill neglect commanded duties. But the tree is not only adjudged to the fire that bears evil fruit, but alſo the tree that bears no fruit: So that the neglect of duty will damn us as ſurely as the commiſſion of ſin. Communicants that God will ſmile upon, are ſuch as not only forſake all known ſin, but do ſincerely endeavour through grace, to yield obedience to the whole revealed will of God, and in Chriſt's ſtrength do ſet about the performance of every commanded duty.

But as for thoſe communicants that do not ſtudy new obedience, and do not make conſcience of performing every known duty, God will ſay to ſuch, as he ſaith to the wicked, Pſal. l. 16. 17. "What haſt thou to do, that thou ſhouldſt take my covenant (or the ſeal of my covenant) in thy mouth, ſeeing thou caſteſt my words behind thee?" They can expect no communion and fellowſhip with him at his table.

But, on the other hand, he makes very gracious and comfortable promiſes to thoſe that ſtudy obedience, Jer. vii. 23. "Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you ſhall be my people." As the prophet Iſaiah ſpeaks to the Jews of the good things of the land of Canaan, ſo may we ſay to you concerning the good things of the ſacrament, Iſa. i. 16. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye ſhall eat the good of the land." As the land of Canaan produced very precious fruits, ſo doth the Lord's ſupper; and theſe far more excellent than thoſe. It is here that the marrow and fatneſs of God's houſe is diſtributed to his children. Well, if you be willing and obedient, ye ſhall eat of the good things of the ſacrament.

But ſee that your obedience ſpring from right principles, from love and gratitude to God, from a true hatred to ſin, and high eſteem of holineſs. It was an excellent ſaying of one, *Were there neither heaven nor hell, yet we ought to love God, and obey him for himſelf.* The ſpiritual is enlightened ſoul doth ſee an unſpeakable deformity in ſin, which cauſeth him to abhor it: He ſees ſuch a charming beauty in holineſs, that he cannot but love and deſire it.

Direct.

DIRECT. XIII. Meditate much upon the Death and Sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, before you approach to his Table.

WOULD you have your hearts put in a suitable communion-frame, then read and think much of the sufferings of Christ; and, in a special manner, take a close view of them on the Saturday's night before the communion. Think on them till your hearts melt, and affections warm; yea, resolve you will not give over till then; and beg God's blessing on your meditations for this end.

Think and wonder at the greatness of the humiliation of the Son of God. Admire the low stoop and condescension of the Son of God, and the King of glory, that he should be content for us to become a creature, and such a mean creature as man; that he, who was equal with God, should become less than God, John xiv. 28. yea, less than angels, Heb. ii. 7. yea, to be depressed below the ordinary condition of man, Psal. xxii. 6. "I am a worm," &c. Think how he denuded himself of all his riches and glory; that though he was the heir of all things, yet, for our sakes, he became so poor, that he had not a cradle of his own to ly in when born, a house to lay his head in while he lived, nor a grave to be buried in when he died. He left his throne of state, to lodge in the virgin's womb: He is born, not in his mother's house, but in a common inn, and the basest place of the inn, a stable, the inn being probably taken up by persons of richer quality: He is cradled in a manger, having no better place allowed him on earth, though the highest heavens were too mean for him.

Think how he was carried to a wilderness to fast and watch, and live forty days among the wild beasts, haunted and tempted by the devil, and sadly buffeted by his own slaves; and all this for us.

View him going about on foot, hungry, thirsty, and weary, yet always doing good: And the more good he did to souls and bodies, the more was he hunted and persecuted,

perſecuted, reproached and blaſphemed; and all this for our ſakes.

View him entering into the garden of Gethſemane, beginning to fear, turn heavy, and cry out, *My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful even unto death.* What made him heavy, but the dead weight of our ſins, and the curſes of the law annexed to them? Behold him complaining to his poor diſciples, that could make no help to him; neither they nor the angels in heaven durſt touch his load, nor taſte his cup: He could have helped them, but they could not help him. Yea, he got not ſo much as ſympathy from them; they fell aſleep when he was at the worſt, and left him to tread out the wine preſs alone, and all for our ſakes.

View him in his fearful agony and bloody ſweat, falling ſometimes on his knees, and ſometimes on his face, praying once, praying again, and praying the third time, that the cup might paſs from him, till he is overwhelmed and covered with his own blood. Behold the great drops of blood burſting through and ſtanding above his garments, and falling and lying upon the ground round about him; being at this time preſt betwixt the milſtone of God's juſtice and our ſins. Behold him ſweating without heat, and bleeding without a wound; the fire and the wound were inward, even in his ſoul. How freely did the fountain of his precious blood open and run to waſh us? Every vein and pore pours out a ſtream, not waiting for the tormentors, and all for our ſakes.

Behold him betrayed and ſold *for thirty pieces of ſilver*, taken and bound with cords like a thief; yea, bound faſt, as Judas bade, and ſo faſt (as ſome ſay) that the blood did burſt out of his tender hands. Can your hearts or eyes hold, to ſee thoſe hands, that made heaven and earth, wrung together and bruiſed with hard cords: To ſee him bound that came to ſet the priſoners free, and looſe us who were Satan's bond-ſlaves! Bleſt Jeſus, had not the cords of thy own love tyed thee faſter than the cords of thy enemies, though they had been the ſtrongeſt cabels or iron chains, they could

could not have held thee: But thou waſt a willing priſoner for our ſakes.

Behold him ſtruck upon the face, ſpit upon, buffeted, blindfolded, mocked, and cruelly affronted by rude ſoldiers, a whole night: Though he could have breathed them into hell, yet he meekly holds his peace, and patiently ſuffers all for our ſakes.

Behold his lovely countenance all disfigured by their plucking the hair from his cheeks with pincers, Iſa. l. 6. The ſweeteſt face that ever the ſun ſaw was all beſmeared with "blood and ſpitting, yet he hid not his face from ſhame."

Behold him led up and down from place to place, with a ridiculous garb put upon him, and yet never reſiſts: He is abuſed and diſgraced; a *Barabbas*, a murderer, the vileſt malefactor in all Jeruſalem, is preferred before him; and yet he complains not. View him as he was uſed by his own family, his choſen diſciples; one of them betrays him, another of them denies him, and all the reſt forſake him, and leave him alone among his bloody enemies hands.

Behold him, that *clothes the lilies of the field*, ſtripped naked: Behold him ſcourged back and ſide; yea ſcourged above meaſure. (Pilate thinking thereby to ſave his life) till all the pavement of Pilate's judgment-hall about him is bedewed with his precious blood: *Yet he willingly gave his back to the ſmiters*, that we might be freed from the everlaſting laſhes of God's wrath in hell.

Behold him with a platted crown of thorns upon his head, with the ſharp points turned inward, and driven into his head, till they pierced his head and ſkull in an hundred places; and ſo he is content to be as the ram caught in the thickets, to be ſacrificed in our room. Behold a new ſhower of blood running down his neck and whole body: Oh! it was my ſins that platted the thorns, and they were the reeds that drave them in.

Behold him, after all theſe ſufferings, put to bear his heavy croſs, upon his ſore and bleeding ſhoulders; with what patience and humility did he bear the law curſed tree that was weighed down with our ſins, and the law's curſes faſtened to it? Yea, he bears without complaint

till

till his ſtrength is faint, he is breathleſs, and ready to faint under the burden, till another muſt help. It was not the croſs that made him faint; he had a greater burden to bear than ten thouſand worlds, even the infinite wrath of God due to our ſins.

Behold him ſtretched out naked, and laid upon the ground, that they might take the meaſure of his body and the holes for the nails: yea, they make them longer than they need, that they might both crucify and rack him at once. Behold the four large nails driven in through the moſt ſinewy and ſenſible parts of his body, and the croſs lift up with the Lord of glory nailed to it: and, when it fell into the hole digged for the foot of it, how did the fall rend and tear his whole body? His own weight was his torture; and the longer he lived, his wounds grew the wider. His hands and feet are fixed, he cannot turn any way for eaſe: The blood ſtreamed down for ſeveral hours, till he expired amidſt theſe tortures.

Behold him hanging on a croſs *betwixt heaven and earth*, as if he had been unworthy of a place in either of them: *Betwixt two thieves*, as if he had been the greateſt malefactor of the three. His ſufferings were univerſal, and did extend over all the parts and powers of his ſoul and body; no part free but his tongue, which was at liberty to pray for his enemies. He ſuffered in all his *ſenſes*; his *ſight* was tormented with the ſcornful geſtures of thoſe that paſſed by, *wagging their heads*; his *hearing* with *taunts* and *mocks*; his *ſmell* with the nauſeous ſavour of *dead mens ſkulls*; his *taſte* with *gall* and *vinegar*; his feeling with the nails and thorns that pierced his head, hands, and feet.

Behold him on the croſs, ſuffering till his ſtrength is dried up like a potſherd; his tongue cleaves to his jaws, till he cries out, I thirſt. And no wonder he thirſted; for, beſides all the loſs of his blood, he was ſcourged with the fire of God's wrath. Yea, *the arrows of the Almighty were within him, the poiſon whereof did drink up his ſpirit.*

Behold him at the worſt, crying out for relief, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* But yet no relief

lief appears, there is none to anſwer: Yea, his own ſun, his own heaven, his own Father, his own Godhead, hid their faces and conſolations from him. He is left alone in midſt of devils and enemies inſulting over him; He falls a ſacrifice to incenſed juſtice, for our heinous guilt and provocations.

Behold the Son of righteouſneſs under a fearful eclipſe. For a candle to be put out is no great matter, but for the ſun to be darkened is marvellous and ſtrange.

In the next place, take a view of his willingneſs to ſuffer all theſe things for us. He quickens Judas to do his work, and he goes out to meet his perſecutors, and boldly tells them, that he was the man they ſought: He will not ſuffer Peter or the angels to do any thing for his reſcue, becauſe of his deſire to drink the cup which the Father had given him, John xviii. 11. And, God knows, a full and bitter cup it was, being all mingled with guilt, wrath, and curſes, heaped up and running over: A cup, which, if men or angels had taſted, they had all ſtaggered and fallen back headlong into hell: Yet, how cheerfully did he drink it for us? He was not like the legal ſacrifices, dragged to the altar; no, he went willingly to it, and tyed himſelf with the cords of love to the horns of it.

O, what affections ſhould the conſideration of theſe things ſtir up in the ſouls of communicants! Are ye going up to mount Calvary, to ſee Chriſt crucified; and, will not ye think on his ſufferings, and be affected with them, ere ye go?

You may here, as in a looking-glaſs, behold what you deſerved at the hands of a juſt God, if Chriſt had not interpoſed for you. You may ſee the wondrous love of Chriſt that paſſeth knowledge, which ought to kindle a flame of love in your hearts. You may ſee the curſed nature and demerit of ſin, that expoſed Chriſt to ſo much ſorrow and ſuffering. Can you look on him whom you have thus pierced, and not mourn bitterly for ſin that did it, and hate it as the moſt ugly thing in the world? Would not your heart riſe againſt the man, yea, againſt the knife that killed your father, brother, huſband, or friend; and, will not your hearts riſe againſt ſin, that

has killed him that is inſtead of all relations, and ſhould be far dearer to us than a thouſand fathers or brothers? Can we look on Chriſt's ſufferings, and not make ſolemn vows againſt ſin, and part with lying, ſwearing, ſabbath-breaking, &c. that crucified him? When the king of Moab was preſſed hard by Iſrael, he took his eldeſt ſon that ſhould have reigned in his ſtead, and offered him up for a burnt ſacrifice upon the walls, 2 Kings iii. 27. whereupon they raiſed the ſiege, and went home. Well, the great God hath taken his only Son, ſacrificed him to juſtice, that we might thereby be perſuaded to leave off fighting againſt heaven.

O, let this ſtrange act, which is both an act of juſtice and goodneſs, ſo over-awe your hearts with fear, and overcome them with love, that you may leave off to offend God any more.

Direct. XIV. Be frequent and fervent in Prayer, before you Approach to the Lord's Table.

THEY that forget God in their cloſets and families, are not fit to come and remember him at his table; therefore let no prayerleſs ſoul venture thither. You ought to double your prayers and meſſages to heaven that week, and eſpecially that night before you approach to this ordinance; if ever you prayed and wreſtled with God, now ſhould be the time of it. As the heathen ſhip-maſter ſaid to Jonah, ſo ſay I to thee, O communicant, Jonah i. 6. "Ariſe, O ſleeper, and call upon thy God, if ſo be that God will think upon thee that thou periſh not." O ſleep not now, when you are in hazard of eating and drinking eternal damnation; but be praying when others are ſleeping. This courſe will ſurely redound to thy advantage, and be the means of procuring ſpecial bleſſings to thy ſoul. When was it that God gave commiſſion to open Paul's eyes, and fill him with the Holy Ghoſt, but then, when he was earneſt in prayer to God, Acts ix. 11. 17. "Behold he prayeth.—The Lord hath ſent me (ſaid Ananias) that thou mighteſt receive thy ſight, and be filled with the Holy

Holy Ghoſt." So, if you were earneſt in prayer before the ſacrament, God would notice you as he did Paul, and give charge to this ordinance to be the means of enlightening thy ſoul, and filling thee with the Holy Ghoſt. It was at the ſacrament of baptiſm that Chriſt's prayers opened heaven, and brought down the Holy Ghoſt upon him: So at the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper the fervent prayers of a believing communicant will open heaven, and bring down the gracious influences of the holy Spirit upon him. Your work at this time is very great, and much need have you to look to God in Chriſt, and plead with him for his ſpecial aſſiſtance: You have very great encouragement to do it; for God never calls any to do his work, but he helps them in it. It is ſaid, 1 Chron. xv. 26. That "God helped the Levites that bare the ark." One would think that the work of bearing the ark, needed no more help from God than the general concourſe of his providence; and yet God helped them with ſpecial aſſiſtance. And if he helped the Levites to bear the ark, becauſe it was his work; will he not help us to receive the ſacrament, which he hath inſtituted for diſplaying his glory, if we ſincerely ſeek his help? You have many errands at this time to the throne of grace, for you have many things to pray for.

1. You ought in general to pray for preparation for this ſolemn feaſt: "For the preparation of the heart in man is from the Lord," Prov. xvi. 1. Lay out the caſe of your heart and ſoul before the Lord, and ſay, "Lord, thou calleſt me to a very ſolemn ordinance; and, who is ſufficient for thoſe things? I have neither a meet ſacrifice to offer, nor a meet temple to receive thee in. I know not how to pray, or to prepare myſelf; how to receive Chriſt, or behave myſelf at his table. Behold the bridegroom cometh, but I am not ready; I want the wedding-garment: Oh, what ſhall I do for clothing to my naked ſoul? My beloved hath ſpoke, ſaying, Riſe up, my love, my fair one, and come away. I have heard his voice; but Oh, I am not ſtirring for it: My heart ſaith, *Yet a little ſleep, yet a little ſlumber.* Lord, awake my heart, ſtir up my graces,

and prepare me for a meeting with my Saviour. Lord, thou art the giver of grace as well as of glory, thou muſt give the frame as well as the feaſt; for without thee we have nothing, we can do nothing; thou prepareſt a table for me in this wilderneſs; but, ſhall the time of receiving come before thou comeſt into my ſoul to ſtir up thy graces in me? What commerce can a dead heart have with a living God? Lord, thou knoweſt my ſins, and the unpreparedneſs of my heart; and, if thou wilt mark iniquity, O Lord, who ſhalt ſtand? My very preparations and beſt performances carry in them matter of indictment againſt my ſoul. But, Lord, though my ſins be many and great, yet doth not the blood of Chriſt cry louder for pardon than my ſins do for puniſhment? O that the cry of that blood may wholly drown the cry of my ſins at this time, and anſwer for the defects of my preparation. Oh, let not my ſoul, whoſe only hope is to be ſaved by Chriſt's blood, be ſent away from his table with the guilt, inſtead of the comfort of that blood upon me.

2. And, more particularly, you ought to pray for ſaving knowledge: Say, "Lord, I am naturally alienated and eſtranged from thee, thro' the ignorance that is in me; O give me underſtanding, that I may know thee, and the myſtery of ſaving grace. Haſt thou not ſaid, that the covenant thou wilt make with thy people is this, "They ſhall all know thee from the leaſt even to the greateſt?" O give me right up-takings of thy covenant, which is well ordered in all things, and ſure! Give grace to know the nature, neceſſity, uſe, and ends of this ordinance, which is the compend and ſeal of it, that ſo I may receive it with underſtanding, and rightly diſcern the Lord's body."

3. Pray for holy reverence and humility of ſpirit. "Lord, affect my heart with aweful reverence of the greatneſs and holineſs of thy majeſty, to whom I am to make ſo near an approach, and with whom I am to renew covenant. Oh, how durſt I, who am ſinful duſt and aſhes, preſume to come ſo near thee, unleſs thou hadſt invited and commanded me? O for deep ſelf-abaſement and humility of ſoul when I go to receive the unſpeakable

able gift of God! O what a wonderful gift is Jeſus Chriſt to ſuch an unworthy and ill-deſerving creature as I am! Lord, give me grace whereby I may ſerve thee acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.

4. Pray for godly ſorrow and contrition for ſin. "Lord, take away my heart of ſtone, and give me a heart of fleſh, that I may lothe myſelf in my own ſight for all my iniquities and abominations. May I abhor them as the ſcourges, thorns, nails, and ſpear, that afflicted my Lord and Saviour: And may I be weary and heavy laden with the burden of my ſins, ſo that Chriſt may give me reſt. Lord, help me ſo to accuſe myſelf, that thou mayeſt acquit me; ſo to judge and condemn myſelf, that thou mayeſt abſolve me; and ſo to exerciſe a holy revenge upon myſelf, that thou mayeſt ſpare me. The days of mourning for my Redeemer's death are at hand; O that then I may ſlay my moſt beloved luſts, and be revenged on them for it, and for their endeavours to rob me of my ſpiritual birthright, my eternal bleſſedneſs! O that I may come to thy table, and receive a bleeding Saviour with a broken heart."

5. Pray for faith, both for the being and the increaſe of faith. "Lord, faith is thy own gift, as well as Chriſt; I believe, Lord, help my unbelief. O for faith's eye to look upon Chriſt, faith's wings to flee to Chriſt, faith's arms to embrace Chriſt, faith's mouth to feed on Chriſt, faith's hand to apply Chriſt! When I ſee the bread and wine on the table, O let me ſee a bleeding crucified Jeſus. Let me not only eat the bread of the Lord, but the bread which is the Lord. May this ordinance be a lively reſemblance, remembrance, and application of Chriſt's ſufferings to me; and may I be helped ſo to put my finger into the print of the nails, and my hand into his ſide, that I may be perſuaded of his ſuffering and dying for me; and may I "not be faithleſs but believing," and may ſay with Thomas, "My Lord and my God;" and with Paul, "He loved me, and gave himſelf for me;" and with the ſpouſe, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." O that I may ſo touch him, that I may feel ſtrength, peace, and virtue come from him, and be healed of all my plagues and uncleanneſſes! Let me ſo by faith

faith feed on his bleſſed body, and bathe my ſoul in his precious blood, that I may be filled with peace and joy in believing; yea, " my ſoul may magnify the Lord, and my ſpirit rejoice in God my Saviour."

6 Pray for love to God and Chriſt. " Lord, circumciſe my heart to love the Lord with all my ſoul, with all my ſtrength. Lord, *ſhed abroad thy love in my* cold and frozen heart, and inflame it with fervent affection and deſires towards thee, that I may be a diſciple whom Jeſus loveth, and that leans on his breaſt. O that " Chriſt " may dwell in my heart by faith, and that, being rooted and grounded in love, I may be able to comprehend with all ſaints, what is the breadth and length, the depth and heighth: and to know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge." O that the remembrance of Chriſt's love may tranſport me with love, captivate my will, and engage all my affections to him. Lord, tho' I cannot ſay, *I am ſick of love* to thee, yet I deſire to be ſick that I cannot love thee more. O for grace that I may be numbered among them that *love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity.*"

7. Pray for love to all the people of God. " Lord, make all thoſe lovely in mine eyes, to whom Chriſt is precious: That I may " know I am paſſed from death to life, becauſe I love the brethren." O for a warm love to all thoſe who are Chriſt's friends, on whom he hath ſet his heart, and to whom he hath given his Spirit; that ſo my heavenly Father may look down upon his children, feaſting together in mutual love and delight, in remembrance of that great love which he hath already ſhewn to us, and with joyful expectations of thoſe great things he hath further promiſed to us. And, Lord, ſeeing thou haſt ſo loved me, let me be perfectly reconciled to every man, that I may " love my very enemies, and do good to them that hate me." May every ſpark of anger, malice, and envy, be utterly extinguiſhed in me."

8. Pray for new obedience. " Lord, ſince thou giveſt this heaven'ly feaſt only to thy diſciples, O make me one of them, and let me attain this mark of a diſciple, obedience to my maſter. Lord, I cannot eat the paſ-

over

over and ſtay in Egypt ſtill, in the ſervice of Satan, and in bondage to my luſts: *O bring my ſoul out of priſon*, and let me eat the paſſover with my loins girt, and ready to march towards the promiſed land. O help me to *waſh my hands in innocence, that ſo I may encompaſs thy altar.* O make me *willing and obedient, that I may eat the good* of this ordinance. And may *the love of Chriſt conſtrain me* to a courſe of ſincere univerſal obedience, that I may *run in the ways of thy commandments.* Seeing Chriſt offers himſelf to me, by way of ſurrender, to receive him as a Saviour, and ſubmit to him as a prince. And, on that ſolemn feaſt of dedication, let me come and dedicate myſelf to thee, ſet myſelf apart for thee, that all my days I may live to thy praiſe."

9. Pray for heart-purity, fixedneſs and ſpirituality, that you may be fit to entertain converſe with a holy God. "Lord, help me to lay aſide and leave behind me all vain, earthly and unſeaſonable thoughts and imaginations, that I may attend upon thee without diſtraction. O let not worldly or wandering thoughts come in, to ſtir up or diſturb the beloved of my ſoul: Let them not come near, or diſpleaſe him: Nor call me away from entertaining and enjoying of him. Lord, bid them be gone. Alas! my heart is naturally in great diſorder, and wholly indiſpoſed for ſuch ſolemn and ſpiritual work: But, O thou who calleſt me to it, do thou diſpoſe my heart for it."

10. Pray for ſpiritual hunger and thirſt. *Lord, thou art ready to give bread to the hungry, and the water of life to him that is a thirſt: But both the appetite and the food, the feeling of want and the relief, are from thee.* O for enlarged affections and deſires after this ordinance anſwerable to my need of it. Lord, create and ſtir up in me earneſt longings and a ſpiritual appetite after this heavenly food; that ſo with deſire I may deſire to eat this paſſover. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo let me pant after thee, O God. Lord, enlarge my heart, and open my mouth wide, that thou mayeſt fill it."

11.

11. Pray for ſpiritual thankfulneſs, and holy joy, in partaking of this feaſt. "O make me to reliſh this heavenly food, and receive it with a thankful heart. Let me not ſit ſad and dejected, as if I liked not the proviſion, or thought myſelf not welcome: But take me into the banqueting houſe, and let my ſoul be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs, that my mouth may praiſe thee with joyful lips. I am to feed on angels food, O let me be employed in angels work, praiſe. Let my ſoul rejoice in Jeſus Chriſt as my portion; and triumph in his mighty acts, in his victories and purchaſe."

12. Pray for the aſſiſtance of God's Spirit in this work. "Lord, caſt me not away from thy preſence, take not thy holy Spirit from me; for without thee I have no thing. I can do nothing. Lord, thou haſt promiſed and declared thyſelf more willing to give the Spirit to them that aſk it, than parents to give bread to their children. Our love to our children is but hatred, our compaſſion hardneſs, in compariſon of thine to thy children: O do not then deny me when my need is ſo great. Thou never ſaidſt to any of the ſeed of Jacob, ſeek ye my face in vain. Lord, ſend thy holy Spirit to breathe on my dry bones and decayed graces, and to be the harbinger to provide entertainment for thy Son in my ſoul, that he may find it ſwept of all ſin, and garniſhed with all the ſacramental graces. O for the Spirit of God to adorn my naked ſoul, and put on me the wedding-garment, viz. the glorious outer garment of the righteouſneſs of thy Son, and the beautiful inner-garment of the holineſs of thy Spirit, that fine linen of the ſaints: That all my nakedneſs may be covered, and my great deformities hid from thine eyes!"

13. Pray for the cure of all thy diſeaſes, at this healing ordinance. "Lord, my plagues are great, my wounds deep, and my diſtempers many: But I have heard of the balſam of the new covenant, my Redeemer's blood, that heals all diſeaſes. "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there not a phyſician there?" Oh, then, let not my pain be perpetual, nor my wounds incurable. Lord, I come to thee to get my dead ſoul quickened, my ſtrong corruptions ſubdued, my faint purpoſes

ſtrengthened

ſtrengthened, and my languiſhing graces revived. O let the author of ſpiritual life uphold and preſerve life in my ſoul. Inflame my coldneſs with the fire of thy love, ſoften my hardneſs with the dew of thy grace, enlighten my blindneſs with a beam of thy light, and anoint my blind eyes with thy eye-ſalve. Let thy compaſſion pity my vileneſs, let thy mercy pardon my ſinfulneſs, let thy wiſdom enlighten my darkneſs, and let thy ſtrength ſupport my weakneſs. Oh will the head let a member periſh? Shall a branch wither for want of juice? Thou art the true vine: O communicate ſap and influence to my languiſhing ſoul. Lord, art thou not as willing to beſtow the fruit of thy blood on us, as to ſhed it for us? Art thou not a ready phyſician, willing to be employed by diſeaſed ſouls? Doſt thou not beſtow thy cures without money, and without price? Lord, here is work for thee, a Job full of boils, a Lazarus over-run with ſores, as poor a patient as ever came to the phyſician's door; yet if I could but touch the border of thy garment, or get but one word from thee, I ſhould be made whole: Oh, ſay unto me, *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*"

14. Pray for a willing and cheerful heart in performing this and all other duties. "Oh, did my Saviour ſo cheerfully undertake to ſuffer for me, and ſhall I be ſlothful and careleſs in approaching to him? Did he go ſo willingly to the croſs to die for me, and ſhall I be ſo backward to go to the communion-table to remember his death? Lord, make me "run in the ways of thy commandments; and let me pray, hear, and communicate with freedom and enlargement of heart. O draw my heart to thee, and let it be carried on with more unweariedneſs and chearfulneſs in thy ſervice. Send forth the gales of thy Spirit, that may "make my ſoul like the chariots of Amminadib."

15. Pray for nearneſs and communion with God in his ordinances, and eſpecially at the communion-table. "Lord, what will a communion-feaſt avail me without communion with Chriſt in it. I go not there for bread and wine, but to ſee Jeſus. What are the elements to me without Chriſt's preſence? Nothing but this can ſatisfy me: Lord, what wilt thou give me, if I go from

thy table Chriſtleſs? Shall I go away empty from a treaſure, hungry from a feaſt, dry from a fountain, cold from the ſun, comfortleſs from the comforter? Lord, ſtand not at a diſtance behind the wall; ſhew thyſelf through the lattice of thy ordinance, and let me ſee the goings of my God and my King in his ſanctuary. Lord, do thou not only ſtand and knock, but do thou alſo open the door of my heart; vouchſafe to come in and abide with me, yea, ſup with me, and let me ſup with thee, that I may be abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs of thy houſe, and drink of the rivers of thy pleaſures. And when "the King ſitteth at his table, let my ſpikenard ſend forth the ſmell thereof." Deſcend into my heart by the influences of thy grace, and let me aſcend to thee by the breathings of faith, love, and deſire. Lord, make this feaſt a type and earneſt of that eternal banquet above; and let me enjoy thy lightſome reviving company in the ſtate of my pilgrimage. O let Chriſt appear and be known of me in the breaking of bread: O let him kiſs me with the kiſſes of his mouth, for his love is better than wine."

Cry importunately to God at this time; ſay, "I will not let thee go till thou bleſs me: If thy preſence go not with me, carry me not up hence. Wilt thou not relieve an importunate beggar, and hear the cry of a needy ſupplicant? Lord, open rivers in the wilderneſs, and ſtreams in the deſert. Let Jordan, at this ſeaſon, overflow all its banks, and let all the dry roots of thy people be watered. And, O let me come from thy table with my pardon ſealed, my corruptions ſubdued, my graces quickened, my faith ſtrengthened, my reſolutions confirmed, my heart enlarged, and my ſoul refreſhed and encouraged to run the ways of thy commandments, and ſo inſeparably united unto thee, that no temptation may be able to diſſolve the union." O for the ſpirit of grace and ſupplication at ſuch a time! for it is the praying and wreſtling ſoul that will be the joyful and praiſing communicant.

DIRECT. XV. After you have done your utmoſt for preparing yourſelves for the Lord's Table, ſee that ye lay no ſtreſs thereupon, but wholly diſtruſt your own Preparations.

O COMMUNICANTS, when you have made the greateſt preparations poſſible, by ſelf-examination, repentance, prayer, &c. ſay, after all, *we are but unprofitable ſervants.* The greateſt ſtreſs and difficulty of the Chriſtian life lieth in this, to be diligent in duty, and yet wholly denied to our duties. Learn then this great point in Chriſtianity, to diſtruſt all your preparations, and caſt yourſelves wholly on Chriſt for aſſiſtance, as if you had done nothing at all; ſaying, it is only *in the Lord that I have righteouſneſs and ſtrength.* You ought to do as King Aſa did, who, though he had raiſed a prodigious army of five hundred thouſand, all mighty men of valour, to fight againſt the Ethiopians; yet he cried to the Lord, and truſted in him for help, as if he had been left alone without one man to fight for him: For, after all his great preparations, it is recorded of him, 2 Chron. xiv. 8, 11, "And Aſa cried to the Lord his God, and ſaid, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many or with them that have no power. Help us, O Lord our God; for we reſt on thee, and in thy name go out againſt this multitude." So let every communicant ſay, "Lord, all my ſtrength and preparations are nought; I have no power for celebrating this feaſt. Help me, O Lord my God; for I reſt on thee, and in thy name I go to this great and weighty ordinance." The ſoul is never ſo well prepared, as when it is moſt ſenſible of its own weakneſs, and relies on the Redeemer's ſtrength: "When I am weak (ſays the apoſtle) then am I ſtrong." And hence it is ſaid of the ancient worthies, Heb. xi. "Out of weakneſs, (*i. e.* felt and apprehended) they were made ſtrong. The gaudy flower, that ſtands and grows on its own ſtalk, doth quickly wither and decay; when the plain ivy, that hangs and leans on the houſe, is freſh and green all

the year. We ought then to be denied to ourſelves, and write after David's copy, who looked to the Lord both for aſſiſtance and acceptance in all his duties, Pſal. lxxi. 16. "I will go in the ſtrength of the Lord, I will make mention of thy righteouſneſs, even of thine only."

A man may in words diſclaim the opinion of merit and worth in his duties and preparations, and yet, in his heart and ſecret practice, put ſome truſt in them; for there are practical papiſts as well as practical atheiſts. Hence God warns us againſt this inward truſt and ſecret popery, Deut. ix. 4. "Say not, in thine heart, this is for my righteouſneſs." Though with our tongues we do not plead for merit, yet there may be a ſaying it in the heart; and God doth well underſtand the language of the heart. Let us therefore look well to our hearts, when we have done our utmoſt in duty, and by way of preparation for this ordinance, that we be wholly denied to all, and cheriſh the thoughts of our own nothingneſs, according to Chriſt's noble rule, Luke xvii. 10. "When ye have done all, ſay, we are unprofitable ſervants." David owns he had nothing to plead when he had done all: For, ſays he, "Of thine own, Lord, have we given thee," 1 Chron. xxix. 14. Of this denied temper was Nehemiah alſo; for, when he had done all for God and his temple that he could, he makes free grace his only plea with God, Neh. xiii. 22. "I commanded the Levites to cleanſe themſelves," &c. "Remember me, O my God, concerning this alſo; and ſpare me according to the greatneſs of thy mercy." Whatever good things he had done, yet he depends on none of them, but pleads, "Spare me, according to the greatneſs of thy mercy." Hence alſo Paul wholly diſclaimed his own righteouſneſs, and that not only while he was a Phariſee, but even when he was a Chriſtian and renewed man; *I account all things loſs but for Chriſt.* O this is a noble attainment, but not eaſily come at. Mr Fox uſed to ſay, "He was more afraid of his grace, than of his ſins," becauſe he found himſelf in ſuch danger by them to be puffed up, and tempted to ſelf-confidence. Let us then be denied to our own attainments in preparation for this ſolemn ordinance, if we would be

be accepted of God: For that man comes to God moſt worthy, that comes moſt ſenſible of his own unworthineſs. So much for the firſt head of the directions, how to prepare for a communion-ſabbath before it come. I proceed now to the ſecond head, to give directions how to ſpend it, when it doth.

CHAP. II.

Containing DIRECTIONS *for the right ſpending a Communion-Sabbath when it is come.*

DIRECTION I.

SEE that you riſe ſooner this morning than ordinary, ſeeing you have extraordinary work in hand. And, while you are riſing and putting on your clothes, let your minds be filled with ſuitable meditations and ejaculations.

Think what a privilege it is, that "your eyes ſee ſuch days of the Son of man, which many prophets and kings deſired to ſee, and might not." O that I may be thankful, and may not abuſe my mercy! This is a great day; O that it may be a good day to my ſoul, even a day in God's courts, and in god's preſence, that will be better and ſweeter to me than a thouſand!

Again think, this may be the laſt communion day that ever I may ſee on earth: This may be the laſt time that I ſhall "drink of the fruit of the vine at a communion-table." It may be the laſt offer that I ſhall get of the water of life; O that I may improve it well! Perhaps ſeverals who ſaw the laſt communion where I am going, and alſo drank with me of the ſacramental cup, have now a cup of the red wine of God's vengeance put into their hands, and are eternally ſinking or ſwimming in the brimleſs and bottomleſs ocean of God's wrath; God keep me from unworthy communicating this day, leſt that be my lot before the next ſacrament. But, on the other hand, it may be there are ſome who

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ſat with me at the laſt communion-table, that are now ſitting at the higher table, and are drinking it new with Chriſt in his father's kingdom: What a ſweet ſong are they preſently ſinging! "Unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and prieſts unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." O that I may this day get a foretaſte of that celeſtial feaſt and heavenly joy, and ſuch a ſeal of Chriſt's love as may fill my ſoul with hope to be a communicant at the upper table, if God ſhall call me hence before the next communion! "Lord, let me have one good day in all my life-time: Shew me a token for good before I die."

Direction II.

RETIRE preſently, O communicant, for prayer and meditation, in order to excite and quicken grace in thy ſoul; and, in a ſpecial manner, ſee to get faith enlivened, and love inflamed. And, for this end, 1. Take a new view of Chriſt's ſufferings, and his unparalleled love manifeſted therein: "Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the ſins of the world." If you have a clear diſcovery of his love and ſufferings at the table, be taking frequent views of him before-hand.

Conſider how free and undeſerved Chriſt's love was. Behold the Son of God intreated by no man, but hated by all men; yet in his love and pity intreats for man, yea, ſuffers and dies for him, even then when he was a ſinner and an enemy to him. Behold him ſuffering for ſin, that never ſinned: Yea, behold him made "ſin for thee, who had no ſin: that thou, who hadſt no righteouſneſs, might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him." View his love with wonder, that made him take on the heavy burden of your iniquities, and bear it, till he ſweat, bled, groaned, and cried under the weight. Behold him ſtruggling, praying, and falling to the ground, till he is all covered with his own blood: Fix the eye of faith upon him, till thine eye affect thine heart. Take a view of his tears and bloody ſweat, his pierced

pierced hands and wounded feet, his ſcourged back and open ſide, his ſtreaming heart and yearning bowels to poor ſinners: This is he, O ſinner! that would rather die than thou ſhouldſt die, who choſe thy life before his own, and now pleads his blood before his Father.

Behold and wonder at his love, that made him tread the wine-preſs alone for us, and drink the cup of the red-wine of the wrath of God; a cup whereinto all our vile and deadly ſins were grated, a cup that no angel durſt taſte; yea, the taſting of it made Chriſt's heart to melt like wax in the midſt of his bowels, Pſal xxii. 14. which was a greater matter than if the whole world had melted to nothing: Yet he drank it off, with the bitterſt dregs of it, and left not ſo much as one drop of it for us. Behold him taking his moſt precious heart's blood, to quench hell's flames that were ready to break out on us! Was there ever love like this?

This love is unſearchably great: You may ſooner find out the height of heaven, the breadth of the earth or the depth of the ſea, than meaſure Chriſt's love; for it paſſeth knowledge, Eph. iii. "It is an unfathomable ocean, that hath neither bank nor bottom. O whither did his love carry him? Even from heaven to earth, from the throne to the manger, from the manger to the croſs, from the croſs to the grave; yea, from the glory of heaven to the torments of hell, and all this for poor creatures, that were deſpicable as worms, defiled as lepers, deformed as monſters, black as Ethiopians, yea as black and ugly as hell could make us. Worſe are we than devils, if we are not affected with this love, that made the glorious Son of God leave the heaven of his Father's preſence, and wade through hell for dregs of the creation. Did Chriſt ſee any thing in us to make him love us? No, he ſaw much to lothe us, but nothing to love us: Yet the time when we were moſt lothſome was Chriſt's time of love, Ezek. xvi. We were lying polluted in our blood, and all ſpread over with running ulcers and putrifying ſores, when Chriſt loved us. Our ſouls were as unlovely as Lazarus's body, whoſe ſores the dogs licked; or Job's body, when he was full of boils, and ſat in the aſhes, and ſcraped himſelf

ſelf with a potſherd: Yet all this could not cool his affection to us. The inſtances of Chriſt's love are inexpreſſible, both in their nature and number. Wonder at his condeſcendency, in becoming not only a creature, but ſuch a mean creature as man, for us; yea, not only a man, but in taking on him the form of a ſervant for us, and being willing not only to lie in a manger, but in a cold grave for us. Wonder that the glorious Redeemer of Iſrael ſhould be content to be born as a beggar, live as a ſervant, and die as a ſlave for us. Wonder that he, who is infinitely pure, ſhould be willing, not only to be numbered among ſinners, and to bear our ſins, but alſo to be made ſin, and likewiſe a curſe for us. Was it not for you and your advantage he did all this? and, will you not admire and love him? He was content to endure the poverty of the world, that you might enjoy the riches of heaven: He lived in the form of a ſervant, that you might have the adoption of ſons: He humbled himſelf to live with men, that he might exalt you to live with God: He bowed his ſoul to death, that he might raiſe you to eternal life: He was ſhut up forty days with the devil, that you might not be ſhut up with him for ever: He was hungry, that you might be fed: He was numbered among tranſgreſſors, that you might have a room among the bleſſed. O believer, he wept, that you might rejoice: Sorrow oppreſſed his heart, that everlaſting joy might be on your head: He was ſcourged and wounded, that you by his ſtripes might be healed of ſin's wounds: He was crowned with thorns, that you might be crowned with glory: He was ſlandered and condemned before men, that you might be juſtified and acquitted before God: He bore the curſe, that you might inherit the bleſſing: He drank the bitter and poiſonous cup of God's wrath, that you might drink the pure river of life: He was deſerted of God, that you might not be forſaken by him eternally: He bore the burden of ſin and wrath, that you might be freed from that burden: He hung upon our croſs, to advance us to ſit upon his throne: He cried out in ſorrow upon a croſs, that we might ſhout joyfully in ſinging God's praiſe for ever:

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He thirſted on the croſs, that we might not thirſt eternally, with Dives, for a drop of cold water to cool our tongue: He ſtruggled in a bloody agony, that we might not ſtrugle among devils in hell's furnace for ever: Oh, what ſhall we ſay of this love! "Lord Jeſus, thy pity was infinite, thy love hath overflown all banks, and thy compaſſion knew no bounds: Thou ſtoodſt before the mouth of hell that I deſerved, and ſtoppedſt the flaming furnace of divine vengeance, that was breaking out againſt me: When I was, like Iſaac, bound to the altar, ready to be ſacrificed to juſtice, thou offeredſt thyſelf, like the ram caught in the thicket, to be ſacrificed in my room: When my ſins had raiſed a terrible tempeſt, which threatened to drown me eternally, thou waſt content to be thrown overboard, like Jonah, to appeaſe the ſtorm: When the ſword of juſtice was furbiſhed, and ready to be ſheathed into my bowels, thou interpoſedſt betwixt me and it, and receivedſt the blow into thy heart: When I was ſhipwrecked and periſhing, thou caſtedſt thyſelf in as a plank of mercy to ſave my life. Can I think on this, and my heart not burn? Can I ſpeak of it, and not ſeek, with Joſeph, a ſecret place to weep in?"

View the ſurpaſſing nature of Chriſt's love. No love like to it; yea, Chriſt's love to us tranſcends his love to all other things: He loved us more than angels, for he would not put on their nature: He loved us more than heaven; for he left that to come and ſave us: He loved us more than riches and honour; for he choſe poverty, and became of no reputation, to redeem us: He loved us more than the comforts of life; for he parted with theſe, and became a man of ſorrows for our ſake: He loved us more than his blood; for he willingly parted with that for us: He loved us more than his ſoul or body; for he gave both theſe to be an offering for our ſins: He was more concerned for us than for himſelf; he rejoiced more in our welfare than in his own; he wept and prayed more for us than for himſelf; and, in the time of his greateſt ſtrait, when heaven, earth, and hell, were all at once ruſhing upon him, we have his prayer, John xvii. Yet it is all ſpent for us, except one

verſe or two for himſelf. Again, Chriſt loved us more than his life; and "all that a man hath will he give for his life;" yet Chriſt willingly parted with that for our ſake: But, is there nothing that is better than life? Yes, David tells us of one thing that is better, Pſal. lxiii. 3. "Thy loving kindneſs is better than life." The ſaints and martyrs, that parted with all other things, would by no means part with that, they would rather part with a thouſand lives than quit with that; yet Chriſt, who had infinitely more of it than ever any ſaint attained to, for our ſakes parted with it, and had the light of God's countenance totally eclipſed from him on the croſs, ſo that he cried out, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?"

II. If you would have the ſacramental graces quickened, particularly faith, take a view of Chriſt in all his ſweet offices and relations: "Look unto me and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth," Iſa. xlv. 22. O communicant, endeavour upon the morning of a communion-ſabbath, to give a believing look to Chriſt in all his bleſſed offices and relations; and this will ſtrengthen and quicken faith, and help thee to act it the more diſtinctly at a communion-table.

1. Look to Chriſt, as a bankrupt debtor to his ſurety, and ſay, "Lord, I owe many thouſand more than I can pay, but thou haſt a ſufficient ranſom to pay all my debt: I flee to thee as my ſurety: Lord, undertake for me, and ſatisfy thy Father's juſtice, that I be not ſeized on, and dragged to hell's priſon for ever."

2. Look to him as an able phyſician to cure thy wounds: "Say, Lord, here lies a Job full of boils, a Lazarus full of ſores at thy gate; here a paralytic hand, here a blind eye, here a hard heart, here a plague, and there a wound, that have ſcorned all other phyſicians, and deſpiſed all other remedies; let me this day get the balm of Gilead, even the ſovereign plaiſter of thy blood, to my various maladies; one touch of the hem of thy garment, and I ſhall be whole."

3. Look to him as a ranſomer of captives, and ſay, "Lord, it was thy errand to proclaim liberty to the captives: I look to thee this day to knock off my fet-

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ters, looſe all my bonds, and bring my ſoul out of priſon, that I may praiſe thy name."

4. Look to him as a mediator and peace-maker, to remove all enmity and quarrels betwixt God and thy ſoul, and ſay, "Lord ſtand betwixt me and thy flaming ſword, let thy atoning blood this day quench the fire of thy Father's anger, and bring the news of peace to my ſoul."

5. Look to him as an advocate to plead for thy guilty ſoul: Say, "Lord, my crimes are great, and my cauſe is bad: But never any cauſe miſcarried that thou took in hand: Be thou mine advocate, and let every one of thy wounds this day be as ſo many open mouths to plead for me; let thy blood ſpeak, that ſpeaketh better things than the blood of Abel."

6. Look to him as thy refuge-city and hiding-place, and ſay, "Lord, I flee to thee for my life: For the avenger of blood, the law and juſtice of God, are at my heels purſuing me; and, if they find me aſſar off from thee, I am ſlain without mercy: The clefts of the rock are my only hiding-place: Lord, be a ſafeguard to me. A heathen could ſay, when a bird ſcared by a hawk flew into his boſom: I will not give thee up to thine enemy, ſeeing thou cameſt to me for ſanctuary: And ſurely thou wilt not deliver my ſoul, when I flee to thee for ſhelter."

7. Look to Chriſt as the ark, that can only ſave thee from being drowned by the flood of God's wrath: Say, "Lord, there is no ark to ſave me but thou alone: I am ſhipwrecked in Adam, and there is no plank but Chriſt to bring me to ſhore: I claſp to thee by the hand of faith. Lord ſave me, elſe I periſh."

8. Look to him as a reliever of burdened ſouls: Say, "Lord, here is a heavy laden ſinner coming to thee this day for reſt: O, ſin is heavier than a millſtone, it is weighed down with the law's curſes; and, O how many of theſe millſtones are on my back! Lord, I come this day to roll them upon thee, who art the ſure foundation that God has laid in Zion, able to bear me and all I can lay upon it: Angels cannot free me of my burden, for the burden of one ſin has ſunk many thouſands

of them to the bottomleſs pit; the ſaints cannot do it, they have burden enough of their own; nay, the whole creation cannot bear my burden, for it is already groaning under the weight of me and it: But, Lord, thou art the mighty one on whom ſinners help is laid, and haſt promiſed reſt to ſuch as come to thee. Lord, let all my burdens fall off this day, that I may be at freedom to run the ways of thy commandments."

9. Look to him as a rich and bountiful helper of the needy: Say, "Lord, pity a needy beggar this day, that is going to the feaſt-houſe to wait for a crumb; thou haſt ſupplied many: and I have heard a good report of thy bounty: Never came there a poorer wretch to thy door than I: is there not a penny of grace left to help me, not a crumb to keep in my life? Lord, let me not go from thy treaſure houſe without an alms, there is bread enough in thy houſe and to ſpare, let me not go without a crumb.

10. Look to him as a prophet and teacher, that can open thine eyes, and give thee gracious diſcoveries of his truths and ways: Say, "Lord I have heard much of thee by the hearing of the ear, but little have mine eyes ſeen of thee: I have been long in Chriſt's ſchool, but little proficiency have I made: Lord, come this day and teach me to profit; let my eyes be opened, that in this ordinance I may ſee the heinous nature of ſin, the ſeverity of divine juſtice, the greatneſs of divine love, the beauty of Chriſt, the precioufneſs of ſouls, the excellency of the remedy provided for ſinners, &c."

11. Look to him as thy head and huſband, with whom you are this day to ſeal a marriage-covenant: Say, "Lord, though I be a moſt deformed, black and unworthy bride, and have nothing but poverty, debt and danger to recommend me to thee; yet ſince thou, who art the chief among ten thouſands are content to match with me; O give me a heart to conſent willingly to the bargain, and ſay, My beloved is mine, and I am his. Lord, help me cheerfully to ſay, Amen to the covenant, and all the articles of it, that I was reviewing and renewing yeſternight: O let the marriage knot this day be caſt, that ſin or ſatan, death or hell, may never be

be able to looſe again: Let him this day kiſs me with the kiſſes of his mouth: O for ſweet communion and fellowſhip with him at his own table: Lord, ſhe wme a token fo; good, ſet me as a ſeal upon thine arm; manifeſt thyſelf to me, as thou doſt not to the world."

Direction III.

LABOUR, O communicant, to get thy ſoul put in a right and ſuitable frame for approaching God's holy table, and entertaining thy Saviour there: Now the cry is making, "The Bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him;" prepare the palace of your hearts for him; cleanſe, ſweep and waſh them; get them adorned and perfumed with the graces of the Spirit. Is Chriſt gone to prepare a place for you, and will you not prepare a place for him? Set up a throne for Chriſt, go forth to meet him with acclamation and praiſe, receive him gladly, ſet the crown on his head, and ſwear allegiance to him, and ſay, as the men of Iſrael ſaid to Gideon, Judges vii. 22. "Rule thou over us, for thou haſt delivered us out of the hand of Midian." O but Chriſt hath delivered us out of the hand of Satan, a far worſe oppreſſor than Midian. Let us welcome him, and compaſs him about with ſongs of deliverance. O communicants, deal not with Chriſt as his country-men the Jews did, John i. 11. "He came unto his own, but his own received him not:" When he came into the world, there was no room allowed for him any where but in the manger, and thither was he thruſt. O deal not ſo with your Saviour; think not a foul ſtall good enough for Chriſt, but make clean your hearts, and give him the beſt room, yea, the upper room there; O ſend the key of your hearts this morning to Chriſt, ſaying, "Lord, take thy choice where to ly: Alas, I may ſay with the Centurion, "I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof." My ſoul is a ruinous, ſmoky, and defiled cottage, thou haſt not a fit place with me to lay my head; But, O thou that didſt not diſdain to lie in a manger among beaſts, and to be entertained in the houſe of Simon the leper, come into my ſoul,

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repair the houſe, and prepare an upper room for thyſelf, that I may eat the paſſover with thee. Lord, ſpeak the word, and thy ſervant's heart ſhall be healed, cleanſed, and made holy, ſoft, and pliable, fit for thy uſe and ſervice. Lord, none can mend my heart but thou who madeſt it: I put it into thy hands: Lord, make it as thou wouldſt have it.

Queſt. What is that frame and diſpoſition of ſoul that we ſhould come with to the communion-table?

Anſ. Take theſe directions concerning it.

I. *Come to it with a holy awe and reverence of God.* Were you going to a prince's table, you would go to it with ſome awe and concern; and, will you have none when you go to the table of the great Jehovah, who is your judge, ſearches the heart, and obſerves all your actions? He is a God that is very jealous of his honour, and will not be mocked; you ought to come to this table with a holy dread and reverence, adoring the holineſs and juſtice of God manifeſted in the ſufferings of Chriſt. How vehemently did he hate ſin, that he would not pity or ſpare his dear Son when he cried to him; but ſeeing he had undertaken to pay our debt, and drink our cup, the leaſt farthing or drop he would not abate him? Tho' the ſinner be ſpared, yet ſin muſt be puniſhed to the uttermoſt; our cautioner paid dearly for it. We ought to adore his juſtice, ſaying with the men of Bethſhemeſh, 1 Sam. vi. 20. "Who is able to ſtand before this holy Lord God?" There is no ſtanding but at Chriſt's back, our bleſſed cautioner, "in whom God is well pleaſed."

II. *Come with holy fear and jealouſy over yourſelves*, leſt you be found unwelcome gueſts, and draw down the guilt of unworthy communicating upon yourſelves; cry, "Lord, keep me from wounding Chriſt and my own ſoul this day; let me not betray the Son of God with a kiſs;" "deliver me from blood-guiltineſs, and from drinking damnation." O what if I want the wedding-garment, "when the king comes in to view the gueſts."

III. *Come with brokenneſs of heart for ſin, the cauſe of Chriſt's ſufferings.* Look on your pride, paſſion, hypocriſy, covetouſneſs, malice, lying, ſwearing, &c. as Chriſt's only tormentors: Behold how they preſſed him down

down in the garden, till he ſwate blood; ſee them binding the croſs on Chriſt's back; ſee them nailing his hands, piercing his temples, and grieving his heart; ſee them buffeting and ſpitting on him; ſee them making him groan, weep, and roar out his complaint, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" It was on us this tragedy ſhould have been acted, on us theſe vials of wrath ſhould have been poured, "For he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our iniquities," Iſa. liii. 5. O ſhall we ſee Chriſt's heart-ſtreaming blood, and our eyes not drop tears? Shall we ſee him ſtretched out and nailed for us, and our hearts not bleed? Oh, it was my ſins that made them nails, they drove them in, they thruſt in the ſpear, yea, they killed the Lord of life; and, ſhall I not mourn? Did you ſee a malefactor, that had committed twenty murders, uſed like Chriſt, your hearts would be concerned: And, will you not be affected to behold the innocent Lamb of God ſo abuſed by your ſins? "Look on him ye have pierced, and mourn." This paſſover muſt be eaten with bitter herbs. Sow in tears, if you would reap in joy. A weeping communicant is a very pleaſing ſight to both God and man: A broken hearted weeping ſinner will ſuit well with a bruiſed and bleeding Saviour.

IV. *Come with burning love and affection to Chriſt.* This is a feaſt only for the friends and lovers of Chriſt, Cant. v. 1. Without love ye have nothing to do here. O believer, is thy heart cold when Chriſt's love is warm? Will you not recompence love with love? Can you behold Chriſt on a croſs, dying with love in his heart, and ſmiles in his looks; can you ſee his bleeding arms open to embrace you, the ſpear reaching his heart, and his affections ſtreaming out to you in blood, and that when you were enemies to him, and haters of him, and not be raviſhed with his love? Can you behold his wounds, or put your finger into the print of the nails, and not be ſick of love, and cry out with Thomas, "My Lord, and my God?" Can you view him that is the chief among ten thouſand, yea, among an hundred thouſand, and among all the thouſands in heaven and earth, and your hearts not love him? Turn over all

things

things both in heaven and earth, you can find none like him, ſo excellent in himſelf, and ſo well adapted to your conditions and circumſtances Paul was a learned man, and knew many things; a travelled man, and had ſeen and heard many things: Yet when he caſts up his counts of all he had ever ſeen, heard or known, he ſays, "I count all but dung and loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt," Phil. iii. 8. 9.

V. Come with much hunger and thirſt to this full feaſt. See that your appetites be not glutted with the world, for the *full ſoul loathes the honey comb*: It is only the thirſty that are welcome, Rev. xxii. 17. "Chriſt fills the hungry with good things." When the deſire opens the heart wideſt, then he opens his hand largeſt to fill it, Pſal. lxxxi. 10. O then, cry, "Give me Chriſt, and deny me what thou wilt; a crumb of mercy from thy table, or elſe I am gone for ever." Endeavour to ſay, as Iſa. xxvi. "The deſire of my ſoul is unto thee, and to the remembrance of thy name. O that I knew where to find him! When wilt thou come unto me?" O for further tokens of his love, and clear evidences of my intereſt in him! O for the ſmiles of his face, and the voice of joy and gladneſs! There are many heavenly dainties here; here are all the fruits of the tree of life, the comforts of the Spirit, the influences of his grace, the bread and waters of life; therefore come with enlarged appetites. The ſpouſe cries, Cant. ii. 4. "Stay me with flagons; as if ſhe had ſaid, "My thirſt is ſo great, it is not a drop or a little cup that will quench it, I would have whole flagons." Fear not to wrong your neighbours: For there is a river to every one of you. Obſerve how earneſt Chriſt was to feaſt with us, Luke xxii. 15. "With deſire (ſays he) have I deſired to eat this ſupper with you," though he had no need either of you or it: And will not you, whoſe needs are ſo great, ſay, "with deſire have I deſired to eat this ſupper with Chriſt before I die; it may be my laſt communion, O let me have ſomething to carry my expence through the wilderneſs; let me have ſomething to comfort and ſupport me, when I go through the valley and ſhadow of death?"

VI.

VI. Come with humility and ſelf-denial, content to be nothing, that Chriſt may be all; and willing to ſubmit to any thing for a blink of his countenance. Be ſenſible of your ill-deſervings, and acknowledge a crumb will be a great mercy. Be content, with the prodigal and woman of Canaan, to be taken into Chriſt's family, though it were in the meaneſt ſtation and employment: Let me be the meaneſt of Chriſt's ſervants, though I be never ſo ill uſed, or ill reſpected, I will be thankful, if I be within Chriſt's doors, have a relation to his family, and can call him Maſter. Again, come ſelf-deniedly, renouncing all confidence in yourſelf, your preparations, humiliations, or performances: Theſe may be good graces, and good duties; but they will be ill Chriſts, and ill Saviours. Freely own that it is not your own righteouſneſs that ſaves you, not your own ſtrength that quickens you; but only Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and Chriſt's ſtrength. Say, "Bleſſed Jeſus, I fly to thee alone; I have no hope in myſelf, nor in any thing beſides thee; all my confidence is in the freeneſs of thy love, the mercy of thy bowels, the merit of thy death, the worth of thy blood, the ſufficiency of thy righteouſneſs, and power of thy interceſſion."

VII. Come with charity and love to all men, even to your very enemies. Baniſh all malice and envy, pray for your enemies, forgive them, wiſh well and do good both to their ſouls and bodies, according to Chriſt's example on the croſs: But eſpecially, bring with you love and affection to God's people, delight in their fellowſhip above all others, for they are the excellent ones of the earth.

VIII. Come with honeſt deſigns to ſeal a marriage-covenant with Chriſt. Conſent frankly to Chriſt to be your Prince and Saviour; do not think of halving it with Chriſt, but be willing to take him intirely upon his own terms. Be content not only to be ſaved by him, but to ſerve him, live for him, fight for him, and cleave to him, all the days of your life; reſolving that all the pleaſures of ſin, temptations of ſatan, and allurements of the world, nay, the hopes of enjoying ten thouſand worlds, ſhall

never prevail with you to part with Chriſt. Come reſigning yourſelves, your hearts, and all you have to Chriſt: Say, "Lord, though I had ten thouſand hearts, and every one of them ten thouſand times better than they are, they ſhould be all thine." Come with ſtrong vows and purpoſes againſt ſin, that murdered your Saviour; reſolve never to harbour it, or make peace with it; but that you will fight againſt it to your laſt breath, and revenge the death of Chriſt on it.

IX. Come with thankfulneſs and praiſe to God for redeeming-love, and providing ſuch a Saviour for you. Let the high praiſes of God be in your mouths; ſend up whole vollies of praiſe to your Redeemer, for undertaking your deliverance. Invite the angels, and all the creation, to aſſiſt you in this work. Stir up your ſouls, and all that is within you, to bleſs his holy name: Your ſouls (like Mary) "ſhould magnify the Lord, and your ſpirits rejoice in God your Saviour;" your hearts ſhould aſcend, like Manoah's angel, in the ſmoke of thankſgiving and praiſe. Say, "Lord, what ſhall I render to thee for all thou haſt done and ſuffered for me? Lord, what am I, that thou ſhouldſt part with thy glory, yea, with thy blood, and with thy life, for ſuch a wretch as me? I am aſhamed that I can love and praiſe thee no more: Oh! my heart is cold, my tongue is ſlow: Let heaven and earth, angels and men, join and extol his free-grace and wondrous love: Let all the world ring with his praiſe."

X. Come with hope and expectation, depending on God's promiſes and Chriſt's merits. You ought greedily to look to Chriſt, expecting ſomething from him, as the poor cripple did from Peter and John, Acts iii. 4. 5. Peter ſaid "Look on us: And he gave heed to them, expecting to receive ſomething from them." We ordinarily receive little, becauſe we expect little; "God's mercy is upon us, according as we hope in him," Pſal. xxxiii. ult. O raiſe your deſires and expectations; for you come to a merciful and liberal God, that will not let the expectation of his poor creatures periſh, Pſal. ix. 18. "The needy ſhall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor ſhall not periſh for ever."

Object.

Object. "Alas! I am a poor, weak, heartleſs creature: I have little ground to hope."

Anſ. You have God's call and promiſe to encourage you. Groan under your deadneſs, and uſe the means; aim honeſtly at your duty, and look to God for accompliſhing his promiſe. Do as the Iſraelites did in the wilderneſs, Num. xxi. 16. 17. 18 God had called them to the place where he promiſed them water, which was very much valued in that dry deſert: Well, did they ſit ſtill idly, waiting till the water ſhould ſpring? No, the nobles put to their ſtaves, and digged in expectation of God's fulfilling his promiſe, and ſung, *Spring up, O well*, &c. Make an honeſt mint, look up with hope, and cry for the ſpringing of the well. Come, bring all your empty veſſels to the fountain, in expectation of a fill: Do as the poor widow, 2 Kings iv. "bring not a few:" for I am ſure the veſſels will fail before the oil fail. Plead with God for the accompliſhing of his word: Say, "Lord, though we cannot ſay pour water on us, for we are thirſty, yet we can plead, pour floods on us, for we are dry ground: Lord, make us as hungry as we are empty, and thirſty as we are dry: Lord, if thou deal with us according to our ſenſe of need, we will get little; but, Lord, we plead, thou wilt deal with us according to our real need, and thy royal bounty, and then we will be right enough."

O poor ſoul! Art thou longing for the ſpringing of the well, ſaying, "O that I knew in what part of this valley of Baca the well would ſpring, what ordinance, what duty, would be the mean: There I would wait and lie, there I would dig and cry: One guſh of theſe living ſtreams would ſatisfy my longing ſoul?" *Poor ſoul, thou ſhalt not die for want; you have the word of a king for it*, Iſa. xli. 17. 18. "When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Iſrael will not forſake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midſt of the vallies; I will make the wilderneſs a pool of water, and the dry land ſprings of water."

Direction IV.

AFTER you have this morning meditated, dealt with your hearts, wreſtled with God, read his word, and performed family worſhip, with faith and fervency ſuitable to this ſolemn occaſion: You ought timeouſly to repair to the church againſt the ſolemn worſhip begin. And let your hearts be breathing forth many heavenly ejaculations by the way; ſuch as that, Pſalm xliii. 3. 4. "Send forth thy light and thy truth: Let them lead me, and bring me to thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy." O, it were a pleaſant frame this morning, to be going with joy to draw water out of the wells of ſalvation! Let us be very thankful, that the waters of life do flow ſo pleaſantly and plentifully to us, betwixt the banks of goſpel ordinances; bleſs God, that has not made the barren wilderneſs our dwelling: But let us think, as we go, that as God rained down manna from heaven on his people, ſo he rained down fire and brimſtone on Sodom and Gomorrah. This ſerves to teach us to rejoice ſo in the mercies which God rains down upon us in the ſacrament, as to fear his judgments in caſe they be abuſed.

Again, think, "I am now upon my way to mount Calvary: Lord, forbide that Chriſt's traitors be my attendants: Let all my luſts and idols be for ever baniſhed from me: May they never find lodging in my ſoul any more: Lord, help me to go this day, with ſuch a melted heart and weeping eyes, as the holy Virgin, Mary Magdalene, and the other tender-hearted women of Jeruſalem had, when they went to mount Calvary, to behold Chriſt crucified. Am not I going up to ſee the ſame crucifixion repreſented before my eyes?"

As it was a part of your ſecret work this morning, to plead earneſtly with God to direct his meſſengers to ſpeak ſuitably to your caſe; ſo you ought by the way to be ſending up ejaculations for this end, and frequently to be crying, *Awake, O north-wind, and come thou ſouth, blow*, &c. The miniſter's words will be but as wind, and a beating of the air, (unleſs the wind of the Spirit blow)

blow) " O Spirit of God, come, influence my heart this day; I dare not go to the table without thy preſence: " Lord, ſtand not this day behind the wall;" for there cannot be a ſadder ſight in the world, than a poor hard-hearted communicant, with God's back turned on him. " If thy preſence go not with me, carry me not up hence." O Lord, it is time for thee to work; I never ſtood more in need of thy preſence than at this time: It is my errand to meet with thee at thy table: Lord, ſend me not away with a ſore heart. A communion-day, without communion with Chriſt, will never ſatisfy my ſoul."

Plead with God, O young communicant, that this may be the day of your acquaintance with Chriſt, even the day of your eſpouſals, and a day to be had in everlaſting remembrance. And, indeed, if you enter this day into the bond of the covenant, it will be a very memorable day. God will bleſs the memory of this day, for he will gain a ſon; Jeſus Chriſt will write this day in his kalender, for he will gain a brother; the Holy Ghoſt will rejoice, for he will gain a temple; angels and ſaints will be glad, for they will gain a fellow-ſervant; and you, eſpecially, may rejoice with exceeding great joy, for you will gain an eternal inheritance.

Directions concerning our Carriage when the time of receiving the Sacrament doth approach.

I. When the time is come, or near, that you are to go to this holy table; conſider that this is the moſt ſolemn and auguſt ordinance under heaven, and requires the moſt profound awe and reverence from you. The place is holy, the table is holy, the bread and cup are holy; and " God is terrible from his holy places." Who is able to ſtand before this holy Lord God? Your danger is great, if you make a raſh approach, and ſeek him not after the due order. The leaſt wrong look or wrong touch at this time is criminal, and may coſt you your eternal ſalvation It may provoke the Lord to make a fearful and viſible breach among you, as he did upon Uzzah and the men of Bethſhemeſh; for, the

nearer to God's altar you come, the fire of his jealouſy burns the more vehemently. Labour then to go to his table with holy fear and trembling; for, as communion-love is the ſweeteſt, ſo communion-wrath is the ſoreſt. Heavy judgments, both ſpiritual, temporal, and eternal, hang over the unworthy communicant's head. If you would prevent theſe, adventure to this table with holy fear and dread: For if the woman with the bloody iſſue feared ſo much to touch the "hem of Chriſt's garment," Mark v. how much more ought you to fear to touch the ſymbols of his body and blood, to put your hand into his wounds, and feel the print of the nails? If ſuch a holy man as John the Baptiſt thought himſelf unworthy to bear Chriſt's ſhoes, how much more are vile ſinners, like you, unworthy to touch and feed upon his broken body and ſhed blood? Let your ſouls then be humble as the duſt when you approach, in a deep ſenſe of your great unworthineſs, former guilt, and breach of former vows made at this table; for to ſuch humble ſouls God has promiſed to look in mercy, Iſa. lxvi. 2.

II. When you are going to the table, labour to ſtir up your ſouls, and all your faculties and affections; excite all your graces and deſires to attend Chriſt. O ſee that your ſouls be lively and your hearts fixed, when you are about to draw near and ſeal a marriage-covenant with Chriſt. You have great need to look to your hearts and frames at this time. A dead heart or an ill frame now, is very unſuitable; it is like the dead fly in the box of ointment, it will be fair to ſpoil your communicating. For God's ſake look to it.

Object. I. "Oh!" ſays one, "my heart is in a lifeleſs and ſtupid frame, even at a dead ſtand, and thinks neither of good nor ill: What ſhall I do with it?"

Anſ. 1. Diſpatch preſently a ſwift meſſenger to heaven, an earneſt ejaculation and prayer, to call for the help of God's Spirit, as Cant. iv. 16. Intreat him to breathe upon your dry bones with a freſh gale, and take a coal from his own altar to inflame your affections.

2. Call

2. Call on your hearts to awake to a lively frame. It is a miſtake of Chriſtians to think they are only to call upon God, you muſt alſo call upon yourſelves, and rouſe up yourſelves, as Pſal. lvii. 8. "Awake up my glory," &c. Stir up yourſelves and all that is within you, according to Pſal. ciii. 1. Speak to your hearts, and expoſtulate with them: Say, "O my drouſy blockiſh heart, art thou not aſhamed to think ſo coldly of thy bleeding Saviour?" Is his heart ſo warm, and thine ſo cold? Doth a dead head become the ſervice of a living God?

Object. II. "Oh!" ſaith another, "my heart is a roving, wandering heart, I cannot get it ſtayed one moment upon one ſubject; it preſently gets away, and hunts after vanities O what ſhall I do with the levity and excurſions of my heart?"

Anſ. 1. Labour now to over-awe your heart with the deep apprehenſion of God's preſence and all-ſeeing eye: God noticeth you more now than ever.

2. Chide and check your heart for its vain excurſions: Say, "Did I come here to think of any thing but of Chriſt and heaven? Is this a place for thinking on worldly toys? Is this the way to ſhow forth my Saviour's death, which is my buſineſs here? What? cannot I watch with Chriſt one hour now? How then will I behold and contemplate him for ever."

Object. III. "Though I am come this length in obedience to a dying Saviour's command, I yet fear to go forward, for I doubt my right. I cannot ſay I am in covenant with God, or that I have faith, and an intereſt in Chriſt, or that his body was broken for me."

Anſ. O diſcouraged ſoul, though you have not the faith of aſſurance, yet ſee if you can get the faith of adherence. Though you cannot ſay that ever you took hold of Chriſt or the covenant before, yet try if you can get a grip of Chriſt now; you are much nearer to him now than at other times. Make an endeavour, ſtir up your ſouls, and go to Chriſt with all the faith you can win at, ſaying, with that poor man, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." If you cannot apply Chriſt to yourſelves,

yourſelves, will you apply yourſelves to Chriſt. If you cannot ſay Chriſt is your Saviour and hiding-place, will you run like a malefactor to him for refuge, and try if he will now ſhelter you in his wounds, when they are ſo wide opened in the ſacrament. He noticeth any poor ſinner that is engaging his heart to approach unto God.

Again, though you cannot ſay that Chriſt is your's, and you are in covenant with him; yet, are you not willing to be his, and give up yourſelf to him? The covenant indeed is mutual, Cant. ii. 16. "My beloved is mine and I am his." But if you cannot lay claim to one part of it, try if you can grip to another. Is it your language, Though I cannot ſay he is mine, yet I am reſolved to be his, and to give up myſelf to him? That is well ſaid, poor ſoul: for you muſt firſt conſent to be his, before ye know that he is your's: You muſt be reſolute in your covenanting with Chriſt; when you are driven from one horn of the altar, hold faſt by another. Flee now to Chriſt, ſaying, "Lord, though I cannot ſay thou art mine; yet I can ſay, Lord, I am content and reſolved to be thine, wholly thine, only thine, and everlaſtingly thine." David could not always ſay, God is mine; but, when he cannot ſay that, he cries, "I am thine, Lord, ſave thou me," Pſal. cxix. 94. Here one that belongs to thee, and has ſurrendered himſelf to thee: "Lord, ſuffer not one of thine to periſh."

Object. IV. "Alas! I cannot ſay to God, I am thine: I fear he will not accept of me, or own me for his."

Anſ. Though you cannot ſay, *I am thine by God's acceptance;* yet, can you not ſay, "Lord, I am thine by my own reſignation, I do devote and give up myſelf wholly unto thee, I will not be the devil's, the world's, or luſt's; I will not be my own, but I will be thine: I am thine, ſave thou me." Go to him with that plea the Campani came to the Romans with, after they had refuſed to help them as neighbours and allies againſt the Grecians, who were diſtreſſing them ſore, and that becauſe the Romans and the Grecians were in friendſhip together at that time: The Campani went and gave up their

their whole country in vaſſalage to the Romans, ſaying, "If you will not help us as our allies, help us as your vaſſals and ſubjects, as we are content to be; we are ſure you will not let your tributaries periſh." And indeed this argument prevailed with them, and ſo will it with God, if you go to him with an importunate faith, and faſten yourſelf upon him. Plead, "Lord, if thou wilt not love me as a friend, yet pity me as thy poor ſubject: I reſolve to be thine, and, if I periſh, one muſt periſh that deſires to be thine. Lord, whether thou accept of me or not, I give up myſelf to thy uſe and ſervice." Art thou come this length, poor ſoul? Fear not, thou ſhalt not periſh, Chriſt is as willing to be thine as thou art to be his: Come forward, and take the ſeal of the covenant, and make a new ſurrender of yourſelf to Chriſt, and it may be he will be made "known to you in the breaking of bread."

III. When this holy feaſt comes to be celebrated, ſee that your ſouls be rightly employed, and your graces ſuitably exerciſed: Study to have your meditations and ejaculations ſuitable to what you ſee or hear.

When you are coming to this holy table, and perhaps may be put to ſtand a little by it, by reaſon of the throng before you get acceſs: Think on what Moſes ſaid to the Iſraelites while ſtanding at the Red-ſea, Exod. xiv. 13. "Stand ſtill (ſaith he) and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord, which he will ſhew to you to-day." In like manner you are ſtanding by the Red-ſea of the blood of Chriſt: ſtand ſtill and wonder at the glorious ſalvation he is ſhewing to you this day.

Or you may think with yourſelf, that you hear Chriſt the captain of your ſalvation now crying, as did Jehu, 2 Kings ix. 32. "Who is on my ſide? Who?" Well, if you will now appear or declare for Chriſt, then you muſt throw your luſts, like Jezebel, out of the window, to be daſhed in pieces.

When you ſee the communicants ſet about Chriſt's table, you may think on that word, Pſal. cxxviii. 3. where God promiſeth to the righteous man, "That his wife ſhould be as a fruitful vine by the ſides of a houſe, and his children as olive plants round about his table." Behold

his promiſe made out to Chriſt, God's righteous ſervant; the church, Chriſt's ſpouſe, is a fruitful vine, and hath born him many children: Would to God theſe may be Chriſt's children by adoption, as well as they are the church's by profeſſion! May it be ſaid of them, that this and that man was born of her! O how pleaſant a ſight is it to ſee Chriſt's children ſet as olive plants round about his table, and to ſee Chriſt himſelf ſetting them there! Surely, if he ſet them, he will ſerve them alſo, they ſhall not have ground to go away with any complaint of him: For Chriſt is no niggard to his children; he is neither hard-hearted nor hard-handed; if his children ſeek bread, he will not give them a ſtone.

When you are allowed to come forward to the Lord's table, think with yourſelf that you hear Chriſt or his miniſters ſaying to you, as the angels did to the women at the ſepulchre, Matth. xxviii. 5. 6. "We know whom ye ſeek, ye ſeek Jeſus which was crucified; come, ſee the place where the Lord lay:" come, ſee the promiſe, come, ſee the elements wherein the Lord lieth.

And, in the mean while, take care to entertain very high and exalted thoughts of Chriſt, and very low and humble thoughts of yourſelf. Say, or think, "Lord I am not worthy to approach ſo near thee, far leſs that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof. I am not worthy to eat the crumbs that fall from my own, much leſs thoſe that fall from thy table. Oh, I am unworthy to be allowed to creep as a dog under the table, far leſs to ſit as one of Chriſt's invited gueſts at the table. I deſerve not room to ſtand amongſt thy ſervants, far leſs to ſit down with thy children. I deſerve not to have daily bread conferred on me, and ſhall I be allowed to eat of the bread of life? I am unworthy to lift up my eyes to heaven, and ſhall I get manna from heaven? I am not worthy to eat the bread of men, and ſhall I be admitted to eat the bread of angels? Shall I entertain him whom they adore: nay, ſit down with him at whoſe feet they fall? Shall I, who am unworthy to tread thy ground, be allowed to tread thy courts? Shall I, that am unworthy to breathe in thy air, have thy Spirit to breathe into my heart, or have leave to breath out my deſires unto thee?"

O how great is the condeſcending goodneſs of our heavenly Father to his prodigal children! Theſe are wonders of mercy, miracles of compaſſion!

Some directions for Communicants when at the Lord's Table.

I WOULD have you at this time to mind that word of Solomon, Prov. xxiii. 1. "When thou ſitteſt to eat with a ruler, conſider diligently what is before thee." O communicant, conſider diligently the ſacramental elements, and what is repreſented and exhibited by them. Conſider the ſacramental promiſes, and what bleſſings are contained in them. Conſider the ſacramental actions, and the gracious acts which the ſoul ſhould put forth with them. It ſhould be a buſy time, and well improven; for though it be ſhort, yet you have many things to do in it, which may generally be comprehended under theſe two heads:

1. Remember the ſuitable ſubjects which are to be conſidered and meditated on at the table.

2. Obſerve and exert the ſpecial graces which are to be employed and exerciſed there.

As to the firſt of theſe heads, I ſhall mention ſome ſuitable ſubjects of your meditation and contemplation at this time; as, 1. Chriſt's death and paſſion. 2. The bitterneſs and variety of his ſufferings. 3. Chriſt's willingneſs to undergo theſe ſufferings for us. 4. The bleſſed effects and benefits of his ſufferings. 5. Chriſt's free love, as the impulſive cauſe of all he did and ſuffered. 6. The evil of ſin, which brought on his ſufferings. 7. God's holineſs and juſtice manifeſted in them. 8. The communion-feaſt above, repreſented by this lower table.

1. Remember and meditate upon the death and paſſion of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. David hath a Pſalm, which he calls a Pſalm of remembrance. Pſalm. xxxviii. Here the Son of David hath a ſacrament, which may well be called a ſacrament of remembrance; for the great end of it is to be a memorial of Chriſt its author and founder: For he ſaid, when he inſtituted it, *This do, in remembrance of me*; and we find theſe words uſed twice over, both at the delivering of the bread and of the wine, 1 Cor. xi. 24. 25. As if he had ſaid, Whatever

you mind, ſee that you forget not your ſuffering Redeemer. Some of Chriſt's works are narrated only by one evangeliſt, as his turning the water into wine, and ſome others; ſome of his works are recorded by two evangeliſts, as the hiſtory of Chriſt's birth by Matthew and Luke; ſome things are recorded by three of them, as the inſtitution of the ſacrament of the ſupper: But as for Chriſt's death and paſſion, it is recorded by them all four. And this is done no doubt to teach us, that though all Chriſt's works and actions are ſeriouſly to be remembered and thought upon, yet none ſo eſpecially as his death and ſufferings. And, when ſhould this be thought upon, if not at the ſacrament, whoſe inſtitution was purpoſely for the remembrance thereof? O communicant, will ye not think of this ſubject when you have Chriſt crucified evidently ſet forth before your eyes, in the bread broken and the wine poured out? Oh was his bleſſed body broken with torments, and his precious blood ſhed for the remiſſion of my ſin: And will I not think upon him? Dear Saviour, thou bideſt me remember thee: Oh how ſhould I ever forget thee at any time, and far leſs now when I ſit at thy table! If I forget thee, O Redeemer, let my right hand forget its cunning, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth. O that I could ever go out of myſelf to remember thee, and never think on thee without an extaſy of wonder!

II. Think upon the bitterneſs of Chriſt's paſſion, and the variety of his ſufferings, and revolve in thy thoughts the ſeveral ſteps and degrees thereof. And particularly take a view of your Redeemer's agony in the garden of Gethſemane; walk into that garden, and behold him falling to the ground under the weight of your ſins, wreſtling as in an agony, and ſweating great drops of blood, and theſe burſting through all his garments. O ſee how he lay, and how he bedewed and ſtained the flowers of the garden round about him with his blood. Never any in the world was known to ſweat in ſuch a manner before, and never any ſince that time. In a natural way of ſpeaking, the coldneſs of the night, his lying on the cold ground, and the exceeding greatneſs of Chriſt's fear at that time, ſhould have drawn all his

blood

blood inward from the outward parts of his body. O but this ſweat was preternatural! He ſweats without fire, and bleeds without a wound. There was no heat, no fire without him that made him ſweat at that time; no, the fire was within him, even the fire of God's wrath kindled in his ſoul; this made the blood about his heart to boil and burſt through his veins, fleſh, ſkin, clothes, and all together. There was no wound outward as yet given him, no ſword, no ſpear, no weapon as yet had touched him, and yet he bleeds: Oh, the wound was inward in his ſoul; deep and fearful was the gaſh which the ſword of juſtice made at this time in his ſoul: The breach was wide as the ſea, and accordingly a whole ſea of wrath brake in with violence upon his ſoul. He falls firſt upon his knees, and then upon the ground; he lies under the preſſure till he is overwhelmed with his Father's wrath and his own blood. Deep called unto deep, till all theſe dreadful waves and billows paſſed over him. He cried to his Father, he complained to diſciples, he ſought their ſympathy and prayers; but no relief had he from that airth; he muſt tread the wine preſs alone.

Next, O communicants, follow your Redeemer after he was apprehended, by your meditations, and trace his ſteps through the ſtreets of Jeruſalem: Think what he underwent when he was hurried from one tribunal to another. Go into the high prieſt's palace and to Pilate's judgment-hall, and obſerve what unparalleled affronts and indignities he ſuffered there, and none to take his part; he was reproached, deſpiſed, and abandoned by all men, as if he had been the worſt of men, and unworthy to breathe in the world. He was put in competition with a vile murderer for his life, and yet the murderer is preferred before him. Yea, his own choſen diſciples, who had been eyes-witneſſes of his miracles, and ear-witneſſes of his oracles, they turn their backs on him with the reſt; one of them betrays him, another denies him, and all the reſt forſake him. Behold how unworthy men buffet him, blindfold him, and ſpit on that beautiful face which angels behold with wonder. Behold how he was ſcourged, dragged up and down, affronted

fronted and mocked a whole night on your account, as if he had been the deriſion of wicked men and devils. Now the devil thought, if Chriſt was to be the elect's ſurety, and was to pluck them out of his claws, he ſhould pay well for them ere he got them; and therefore many a wound and buffet got he: But content is our Redeemer to take all, to get his elect free and ſafe.

In the next place, behold how the heavy tree of the croſs was laid and faſtened on the ſore and bleeding ſhoulders of our Saviour, and he obliged to carry it to the place of execution. Follow him in your thoughts, and ſee him wreſtling under the weight, when going up mount Calvary: He carries it, till he can carry it no further, he is ſpent and founders under the load, yet deſires no relief. Aſcend mount Calvary, and there ſee the croſs laid down upon the ground, and Chriſt, the bleſſed victim, laid down upon the croſs, which was a rack as well as a death; ſee how he is racked and nailed to it by the bloody executioners. And then behold the curſed tree lifted up with the Lord of glory faſtened to it, and fixed on the top of mount Calvary, as a ſacrifice to juſtice for an elect world. Behold him ranked among malefactors, and hanging betwixt two thieves. Behold his hands and feet pierced and rent with nails, his glorious head covered with a crown of thorns, and his tender ſide run thro' with a ſpear. See how the thorns pierce his holy head; ſee how his precious blood trickles down from his many wounds; ſee how his royal viſage turns pale; ſee how his head bows, and lies a-dying on his bleeding breaſt. Is not this an affecting ſight?

Again, Conſider the prodigious outward darkneſs that was on Chriſt during his paſſion on the croſs for ſeveral hours together, to ſhew the horrible inward darkneſs that was on his ſoul while the wrath of God acted againſt him as being the ſacrifice for the world's ſins. We read, that while Abraham was offering his ſacrifice, Gen. xv. 12. the ſun was going down, and an horror of great darkneſs fell upon him. So fared it with Chriſt, while he offered himſelf a ſacrifice for us. Now, the Lord revealed his wrath from heaven againſt the unrighteouſneſs of the world, which was at this time

time laid on Chriſt. Our Redeemer lay under this darkneſs, to ſhow that we ſhould have ſuffered the horror of darkneſs for ever, even that blackneſs of darkneſs, which the apoſtle Jude ſpeaks of. But, glory to God, the blackneſs of darkneſs cauſed by God's wrath for ſin, was now laid on our Surety. Strange! God cauſeth his ſun to ſhine upon the juſt and unjuſt, but on our Redeemer now it muſt not ſhine, as if, of all the unjuſt ones in the world, he were the moſt unjuſt, having the whole injuſtice of the elect laid to his charge. Oh, ſpotleſs Lamb of God! Innocent Redeemer of mankind! Moſt pure and juſt one, that never offended againſt the law! And, muſt thou be dealt with as the moſt unjuſt perſon that ever breathed in the world, becauſe of the injuſtice of others? Now all the powers of earth and hell were let looſe againſt our Redeemer: all theſe lions, bulls, dogs, and unicorns, were ſet upon him to tear him And, was it not enough that earth and hell were againſt him, but muſt heaven ſet itſelf againſt him too, and declare its indignation by that viſible ſign of the horrible continued darkneſs. Oh, that was heavier and ſharper to our Redeemer than all the reſt of his ſufferings: Under the reſt he was ſilent, but now he cannot hold his peace; and therefore ſends forth that formidable loud cry, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" During the continuance of theſe three dark hours was Chriſt drinking the bitter cup; and now he comes to the bottom and bittereſt dregs of it. Now were the invenomed arrows of the Almighty piercing him in the moſt ſenſible part; and therefore he muſt cry. O how juſtly then might he have cried out with Job, and with better ground too than he, Job xix. 21. "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me!" How truly might the huſband now have taken up the ſpouſe's lamentation, Lam. i. 22. "Is it nothing to you, all ye that paſs by? Behold and ſee, if there be any ſorrow like unto my ſorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce wrath!" Do but imagine what exceſſive pain and exceſſive torment he underwent

underwent both in ſoul and body, when he made this fearful outcry: And canſt thou, O communicant, ſee ſuch a tragedy acted on the bleeding Jeſus with dry eyes? This ſacrament is, as it were, a viſible ſermon on our Saviour's paſſion; in it we behold the whole tragedy that was acted on the croſs. Here we view the whole circumſtances of the barbarous malice of the Jews and Romans, againſt the innocent Son of God. And we ſhould endeavour to be as much affected therewith, as if we had ſeen the ſame acted with our bodily eyes.

Moreover, Think now upon Chriſt's cry upon the croſs, when he ſaid, *I thirſt, I thirſt.* No wonder he cried ſo, when there was a furnace of wrath kindled in his ſoul, a fire that dried up his ſtrength and moiſture like a potſherd, and made his tongue cleave to his jaws. A ſtrange complaint! *I thirſt*: The creator is thirſting, and there is no creature to give refreſhment. Strange! Might not one have cried, "O where were all the wells in Jeruſalem at this time? Where all the fountains, rivers, and lakes in the world? Where all the vines of that fruitful land, when my Lord and Saviour could not get a drink? Fy upon you all, that would let glorious King Jeſus be burnt up with thirſt." O, but they might have anſwered, "We dare not own nor relieve him at this time: God hath laid an arreſt on us, and we dare not break it to ſerve our maſter." How ſtrange to hear the fountains and vines ſay, We will give Pilate and Herod, and all the enemies of Chriſt drink; but we will give Chriſt himſelf none, though he die for thirſt! Oh, is there no liquor for precious Chriſt in all the earth, but bitter gall and vinegar to increaſe his thirſt and torment: Not a cup of cold water for the Lord of glory, not a drop to cool his ſcorched tongue; but he muſt die crying out, *I thirſt.* But O, if my Saviour had not thirſted on the croſs, I had thirſted with Dives in hell; nay, all the elect had lien there in that lake of fire, and cried for ever, *I thirſt, I thirſt.*

And further, Conſider the extent and univerſality of his ſufferings. He ſuffered in both natures. His Godhead indeed could not ſuffer grief, but it ſuffered an eclipſe,

cliſe, and lay under a vail for thirty three years, except one hour it broke out and ſhone on mount Tabor. He ſuffered in all his offices; for they mocked and ridiculed him as a prophet, deſpiſed and inſulted him as a prieſt, abuſed and ſlighted him as a king, putting a mock ſceptre in his hand, and arraying him with an old purple robe, mock habiliments of majeſty. He ſuffered in all the powers and faculties of his ſoul, and in all the ſenſes and members of his body: His head, heart, hands, back, ſides, and feet, were all mangled and pierced, and no part of him free but his tongue, to pray for his enemies. He ſuffered in his outward goods; for what he had of this kind were his garments, and theſe were taken from him. Moreover, he was wounded in his name and reputation; for he ſuffered as a blaſphemer againſt God, as a traitor againſt the Roman emperor, and as an enemy to Moſes's law, though he was entirely innocent as to all the three. He ſuffered from all hands; from heaven, from earth, from hell; from Herod, from Pilate, from the High Prieſt: from the Romans, from the Jews, from the ſoldiers; from the clergy; from the lawyers; from rulers, from commons; from friends, from foes: from diſciples, from ſtrangers; all were againſt him: But, which was worſt of all, God was againſt him too. For he being ſubſtitute in the room of ſinners, God acted as an inexorable judge toward him; he ſmote him with the ſword of juſtice, frowned on him in a terrible manner, and withdrew from him all the ſenſible feelings of his loving-kindneſs, and reſtrained the influence of thoſe beams which might any way refreſh his troubled ſoul in the hour of his greateſt need. So that there was never any ſorrow like our Redeemer's ſorrow.

Hence it was that he *offered up his ſupplications with ſuch ſtrong crying and tears*, Heb. v. 7. Hearken, O communicant, how Chriſt wept and ſobbed in the garden, and how loud he cried on the croſs, *Father, Father: Mercy, mercy: My God, my God.* But, what a fray think you was there in heaven at this time?—Why? The Son of God weeping! The Creator of the earth crying and ſobbing on the earth! Never was there

ſuch a commotion in heaven or earth, either before, or ever ſhall be after. What a ſtir was there among the angels, when their Lord was weeping, crying, and ſobbing? How amazed were they, and intent upon the iſſue! Strange! might they ſay, he *that takes up the iſles as a little thing*, crying ſo hideouſly at this time! He that can bear up heaven and earth with a finger, weeping! What can be the matter? Surely there was more than the tree on Chriſt's back, more than the thorns in his temples, or the nails in his hands and feet. Oh, there were the curſes of God's law on the tree that Chriſt bore, which were heavier than ten thouſand mountains of iron! The poiſon of God's wrath went in with the thorns and the iron nails, and entered into his very ſoul.

Chriſt's martyrs and ſufferers have rejoiced in their ſufferings, and ſung praiſes under their tortures; and yet Chriſt, who is the author of their ſtrength and comfort, doth himſelf complain and weep! Oh but all the martyrs ſufferings were nothing but flea-bitings to Chriſt's! They had God's preſence with them in their trials; but Chriſt had God angry and withdrawn from him: Nay, the Lord did run upon him as a giant, and made him the butt of his envenomed arrows. Hence it was, that our Lord, at the ſight of his wrath, began to fear and be ſore amazed, Mark xiv. 33 The word in the original language is *ekthambeiſthai*, i. e. *to be aſtoniſhed with terror*. To ſee millions of men deſpairing, is not ſo much as to ſee Chriſt beginning to fear. And O it was not a ſmall fear that was on our Redeemer; no, it was a great fear and amazement. Never was any man ſo afraid of the torments of hell, as Chriſt (ſtanding in our room) was of his Father's wrath; becauſe never man knew the power of that wrath ſo well as he. O what anguiſh was there at Chriſt's heart, that made it to bleed without any outward violence, and that blood to burſt through both fleſh, ſkin and garments at once! The perfect knowledge which Chriſt had of things aggravated his ſufferings: He did not ſhut his eyes when he drank the cup; no, he perfectly ſaw how dreggiſh and bitter it was, and yet he ventured

ed on it. Many men fear not hell, becauſe they do foreſee it not; if they did ſee that pit open for them before they came at it, it might perhaps cauſe them tremble at their ſins, and many wicked men might run mad at the horror of it: But Chriſt clearly foreſaw all he met with, which was far greater and worſe than the torments of any damned ſoul; and this made him to be amazed with fear.

Finally, conſider how our Redeemer at laſt bowed his head, and gave up the ghoſt! Strange ſight! to ſee the Lord of Life death's priſoner! to ſee the Princely head of Jeſus falling down upon his breaſt! To ſee the Lord of life wanting life; to ſee theſe eyes, that were oft lift up to heaven in prayer, now waxed dim and fixed that they cannot move! To ſee that mouth, that ſpake as never man ſpake, now ſilent and not able to ſpeak a word! An affecting ſight! The world never ſaw the like! To ſee the fair corpſe of glorious Jeſus rolled in linen, and laid in a ſilent grave! To ſee him lying there dead, that raiſed Lazarus from the grave, to ſee him wanting life, that gave life to men and angels; and all for thy ſake, O believing communicant!

And then, how moving were the circumſtances of his paſſion! Remember how ſhamefully the Lord of glory was put to death, how he was ſtript and hung naked before all Iſrael, and before the ſun. And, where was it? Even at Jeruſalem, which he had honoured with his preſence, taught with his preachings, aſtoniſhed with his miracles, and bewailed with his tears "O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem (ſaid he) how oft would I have gathered you, but you would not! O if thou hadſt known in this thy day!" &c.——What place in Jeruſalem was it? Without the gates of Calvary, among the ſtinking bones of vile malefactors. When was it? At the paſſover, a time of great concourſe of all the Jews and proſelytes: A time when they ſhould receive the figure, they reject the ſubſtance; when they ſhould kill and eat the ſacramental lamb in faith and thankfulneſs, they kill the immaculate Lamb of God our true paſſover in cruelty and contempt. ——With whom? Even in midſt of two thieves, as if he had been the captain of thieves. How great was

the disgrace and contempt that was poured on the glorious Redeemer of Israel! Behold, he who thought it no robbery to be equal with God, is himself made equal with robbers and malefactors! Jeremy laments it, in Israel's case, as a piece of the most reproachful treatment, that princes were hung up by their hands, Lam. v. 12. Oh, thus was the Prince of the kings of the earth treated for our sakes; and, shall we not be deeply affected with it?

III. Another suitable subject of meditation at the Lord's table, is the willingness of our Redeemer to undergo all these sufferings for us. He was no-wise importuned or compelled, but most freely undertook to pay the elect's debt, Psal. xl. 7. 8. "Then, said I, Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will." As if he had said, "Father, I see no other is able to pay the debt of these poor bankrupts. The Levitical priests, for all the beasts they have killed, and all the sacrifices they have offered these many hundreds of years, they have not been able to pay so much as one farthing of the elect's debt to this day; it is all entirely owing still." "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not;" I see these will not do; but I know what will: Then said he, "Lo, I come;" I'll be surety, and I will do the work effectually; but I must leave the glory of heaven for a time. Then farewell, Father, for thirty-three years; farewell, all my angels, and all my saints, till I come back again; I must go and relieve these perishing souls, and I will do it to purpose." The Lord saith to us, by that wise man Solomon, "Be not surety for any man:" But, saith Christ, Though I give that advice to others, yet I will not take it to myself; I will be surety for many men, yea, for strangers, though my very garments should be taken away for it. My heart bleeds for them; I cannot see them thrown into an eternal prison, when I am able to pay their debt. I will go and pay it for them. Well, when the time came to pay the debt, did he begin to rue the bargain? When he found the debt great, and the payment heavy, did he shun his creditors, as many men do? No, he is as willing to pay the elect's debt, as God to exact it. "With desire,"

ſays he "have I deſired to eat this paſſover;" becauſe now the term of payment which I long looked for is come. One might have thought, for as frank as he is in undertaking, yet ſtay till he once taſte the bitter cup he is to drink, he'll perhaps change his mind, and begin to ſhrink from it. No, no, the taſte he had got of the cup's brim made him thirſt the more earneſtly for the very dregs of it, that he might get his poor elect put altogether beyond the danger of it, Luke xii. 50. "I have a baptiſm to be baptized with, and how am I ſtraitened till it be accompliſhed?" It is a terrible black cloud that hangs over my peoples heads; I long for its breaking upon me their Surety, that I may get them ſafe, and out of all hazard. And when Peter drew a ſword to defend his maſter, and prevent his ſuffering: "Hold thy hand (ſaith he to Peter) no ſwords; the cup that my Father hath given me, ſhall I not drink it? It is a bitter cup indeed. I find it from the large draught I have taken of it juſt now in the garden; but though it be bitter, yet it is juſt: I have undertaken it as the elect's Surety; and, Peter, will you hinder a man to pay his debt? What then would become of all my elect's ſouls, and of your ſoul among the reſt? If this cup be death to me, it would be eternal damnation to you. I have legions of angels ready to reſcue me, if I needed them; they are all looking on, and waiting my orders: But keep your poſts, ye angels; come none of you to my aſſiſtance: Let no man draw a ſword, and let none of my diſciples offer to interpoſe; for I am reſolved to pay their debt, I will lay down my life for my ſheep. Let Jonah then be caſt into the ſea, and ye ſhall be all ſafe." Oh, what a willing ſacrifice was our Redemer! He is content to ſwim in a ſea of wrath for us the ſpace of thirty-three years; and never deſired deliverance till the ſea is perfectly calm, and his elect out of hazard of being ſwallowed up.

Conſider how he quickened the traitor Judas, and bade him make diſpatch, when he was going about his bloody work. He ſung a hymn when he was going to the garden to be apprehended. He caſt himſelf in the perſecutors way, goes forth to meet them, and boldly

preſents

preſents himſelf to them; and, as if they were too ſlow in apprehending him, he quickens them to it, by telling them twice over, He was the man they ſought. And then remember how willing he was to let malefactors bands be laid on his innocent hands; hands that never did evil, hands that never ſtole any thing, that never ſhed blood; nay, hands that healed diſeaſes, cured the lame, fed the hungry, and looſed our fetters. But, what need was there for binding ſo willing a priſoner. He was to make no ſtruggle, no reſiſtance, but was like a lamb led to the ſlaughter, without opening his mouth. O, but he is willing to be bound for our ſakes! Father, ſays he, bind me and looſe them; let me be the ram caught in the thicket, ſlay me and ſave them. All their ills, all their debts, all their deſerts, be upon me; as Paul ſaid to Philemon concerning Oneſimus, Phil. 18. "If they have wronged thee, or owe thee ought, put that on my account;" charge it on me, take payment and ſatisfaction from me.

Again, when he was before the high-prieſt accuſed, and witneſſes againſt him, he would not ſay a word in his own defence; though they could prove nothing, yet he deſired not to be releaſed. Though he was entirely innocent of crime or fault before the world, yet he knew he was guilty by imputation and voluntary ſubſtitution, and therefore he holds his peace. Seeing he was liable before God as a Surety, he would not hinder the payment, but willingly ſubmits to the hardeſt conditions of our relief. Though wicked Pilate was convinced of his innocence, and ſought to ſave his life, yet he ſought it not himſelf: Hence we read how Pilate ſcourged Chriſt very ſore with ſharp platted cords, and then brought him forth to the people, to ſee if their hearts would relent, when they ſaw him all bleeding, ſaying, *Behold the man:* Surely (thinks Pilate) when they ſee his furrowed back and bloody ſhoulders, they will be ready to ſay, *Poor man, thou art ill enough handled already for any ill thou haſt done.* But Oh, he knew no better: Juſtice was not ſatisfied, and theſe hell-hounds were not ſatisfied, they muſt have his life, his heart's blood, or nothing. And your loving Saviour, O believer, ſays

Amen,

Amen to it, you ſhall have it. I will die, I will be a ſacrifice for ſin, I will ſatisfy my Father's juſtice to the uttermoſt, I will have my beloved bride out of danger; I will not leave one farthing of the debt for my people to pay.

Next, obſerve how willingly he took the heavy croſs upon his bleeding ſhoulders to carry it to the place of execution, though his ſtrength was very much ſpent already with watching, wreſtling, buffeting, ſcourging and loſs of blood. O what a ſight do you think was our Lord Jeſus going forth out of the gates of Jeruſalem with his heavy croſs and your ſins on his back, and like to fall under the burden as he went! How weak was he in body, and weary in ſoul, ere he got to the top of mount Calvary? And what ſaw he before him as he was climbing that mount? Nothing but a curſed death, and a black cloud of God's wrath. Yea, he had a load of wrath already on his back, that was far heavier than the croſs he was bearing: Oh, it was no wonder that he ſtaggered, foundered, or fell under his burden; ſo that Simon the Cyrenian was compelled by his enemies to carry the light end of the tree behind him, leſt he had died before he came to the top of the mount. But our loving Jeſus, though he was ſpent and weary in his body, yet forward and willing was he in his mind to go and be made a ſacrifice for us: And therefore up the mount will he go, though he ſees juſtice, devils and wicked men at the top of it, waiting to faſten on him when he comes; but, ſeeing there was no other way to deliver his loſt ſheep, he will go and meet them. Well, O communicant, obſerve and take notice of your Saviour's ſteps, as he went up the mount, with the burden you laid upon his back, follow him all the way with an eye of faith: Though it was curſedly heavy, yet how patiently doth he bear it. He complains not, he opens not his mouth: He will not bid you or any of the elect lend him a lift: for he knows you are not able to bear the leaſt grain-weight of his burden; it would break your backs, and cruſh you to hell for ever: He will bear it all alone; only

only he will have you to notice him with the eye of faith, and to remember him with love and gratitude.

IV. Let the bleſſed effects and benefits of Chriſt's ſufferings be the ſubject of your thoughts at this time. Hereby juſtice is ſatisfied, and believers are redeemed. The fire of divine anger is quenched, the mouth of hell ſtopt, the ocean of wrath dried up, the raging ſea quelled, the roaring lion vanquiſhed; the old ſerpent is unſtinged, and his venomous head bruiſed; the law is diſarmed of its thunders and curſes, and its loud clamours againſt us ſilenced; our debts are paid, and diſcharge obtained; an angry God becomes a reconciled Father, and both grace and glory are purcheſed. Hereby our putrifying ſores are cleanſed, our deadly plagues cured, God's beautiful image reſtored, ſlaves of ſatan become ſons of God, heirs of hell become heirs of heaven, rebels againſt heaven become favourites of God, and traitors get acceſs to his throne. Hereby the gates of Paradiſe are opened, the flaming ſword removed, glorious manſions prepared, and the crown of life purchaſed for believers. It was not for nought that our Redeemer groaned and wept, ſwate and ſtruggled, bled and died. Theſe great deliverances and mercies were deadly hard to bring forth. They put our Redeemer to cry out, to the amazement of angels, and horror of men, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" But, now it is finiſhed, his agony is over, the deliverance is wrought, and redemption is purchaſed: Juſtice now ſaith, "it is enough, I am fully ſatisfied with the Surety's payment, I demand no more;" the ſacrifice is of a ſweet ſmelling ſavour to me, and it perfumes all the elects perſons and performances. Nay, ſo efficacious and acceptable were theſe ſufferings, that the virtue of them reaches back to the beginning of the world, and extends forward to the end of it. God was ſo well pleaſed with them, that he accepted of them as a ranſom for elect ſouls four thouſand years before he endured them. The Surety's payment was ſo acceptable, that he took many thouſands to heaven before the debt was paid, upon Chriſt's parole that he ſhall pay; for all the

ſaints

ſaints under the Old Teſtament went to heaven this way: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed;" this God declared from heaven again and again, *q d.* "Many a time have the elect grieved me; many a provocation have their ſins given me; yea, have their duties given me: But I am well pleaſed with my Son, their Surety hath ſatisfied me for them all."

V. You ought to meditate on the impulſive cauſe of Chriſt's ſuffering on his part. His free love was the only motive; it was this that cauſed him to take upon him the heavy burden of our ſins, that would have ſunk us into the bottomleſs pit. As often as we come to the Lord's table to partake of theſe elements, we ſhould do it in remembrance of Chriſt's unſpeakable and incomprehenſible love to us: We ſhould never perform this holy duty without admiration and aſtoniſhment at the thoughts of our Saviour's infinite love and undeſerved compaſſion toward us, in that he laid down his life to ſave ours who had rebelled againſt him. Our Redeemer well knoweth the evil nature and diſpoſition of man, that he is apt to forget his beſt friends, and to turn unthankful for the greateſt benefits ever he received; and therefore he conſults our eternal good, by injoining us to ſolemnize this ordinance in remembrance of that immenſe love he expreſſed towards us in his death and ſufferings. Beſide what I have formerly ſaid of your meditating on and admiring the love of Chriſt before your coming to his table; I do exhort you, now you are at the table, to fall a wondering at it afreſh, for this is moſt proper work for you at ſuch a time.

"O the love of Chriſt that paſſeth knowledge!" Where ſhall I begin my thoughts on this ſubject? and, when begun, how ſhall I make an end? Thy love, Lord, is ancient; thou lovedſt us firſt, and that when there was no eye to pity: Thou tookeſt not on thee "the nature of angels, but the ſeed of Abraham;" they are bound with chains of darkneſs, whilſt thou art drawing us with cords of love. Yea, thou lovedſt us when enemies. To have ſpared our lives had been unexpected, undeſerved mercy; for, "who finds his enemy, and lets him go well away?" But, Lord, thou haſt

found me in mine enmity, and haſt pitied me; yea, when my hand was lifted up againſt thee, thine arms have been open to embrace me. Nay, thou haſt opened thy very heart to lodge thy profeſſed enemies who have trode thee under foot. Thy bowels yearned towards them who raked in them with their bloody hands. Thy heart burned with affection towards them that cruelly pierced it. "Herein Chriſt hath commended his love to us that while we were ſinners, Chriſt died for us." O aſtoniſhing love! that the general ſhould die for the ſoldier, the phyſician for the patient, the maſter for the ſervant, the ſhepherd for the ſheep, the innocent for the guilty, the juſt for the unjuſt, the prince for the rebel, the Lord of glory for the children of diſobedience! He that was without all ſin, for him that was without all righteouſneſs; yea, the Creator for the creature, God for man, the righteous Judge for the condemned malefactor! O love without a parallel! For the Judge to put himſelf in the malefactor's cloathes and room, and ſuffer death for him! For the bleſſed Son of God to interpoſe his own innocent breaſt to receive thoſe mortal wounds due to us! Behold God all-ſufficient expoſed to hunger and thirſt, grief and wearineſs, reproach and indignities of all ſorts! Behold the world's Saviour wounded, mangled, and killed by ungracious man whom he came to ſave! Glorious Saviour, what love was this, that thou ſhouldſt become "a man of ſorrows and acquainted with grief;" that from the womb to the tomb, from the cradle to the croſs, thy whole life ſhould be a continued martyrdom! That thou ſhouldſt be content to be born among beaſts, live among mariners, and die among thieves; and all to obtain a place among the bleſſed for us! O the unſpeakable love of Jeſus! His name is love, his nature is love, his words were love, and his actions were love. He preached love, he practiſed love, he lived in love, he was ſick of love, nay, he died for love." The apoſtle ſpeaks well, it is a known unknown love. Eph. iii. 19. We may feel it, but O we cannot fathom it. Jacob ſhewed great love to Rachel, in his enduring the heat by day, and the frosts by night for her: But our

lovely

lovely Bridegroom ſhewed far greater love to his ſpouſe in undergoing the curſed, painful and ſhameful death of the croſs for her. It is reported of the pelican, that when her young ones are ſtung with ſome poiſonous ſerpent, ſhe beats her breaſt with her beak till the warm blood guſheth out, which they ſuck and recover: We are all ſtung mortally by the old ſerpent the devil; but behold the love of our heavenly Pelican, he let out his heart's blood to recover us.

O communicant, remember his love, ſeeing he requires it at this time, *Do this in remembrance of me.* O remember Chriſt, for he did not forget you. He minded you at his laſt ſupper, he made his teſtament and put you in it, and left every believer a good legacy At his death he minded you more than he minded himſelf In his laſt prayer he put up many a petition for you, but few for himſelf. In the garden, on the croſs, and in the grave, his poor loſt ſheep were ſtill in his mind: He minded you both day and night; many a night's ſleep took Chriſt's ſheep from him, thinking on them, and pleading for them. O that was a remarkable night's ſleep that Chriſt wanted, when he ſwate blood in the garden for you; that was a night never to be forgotten; think on it now. When wanted you a night's ſleep for Chriſt thinking on his love, wondering at his ſufferings, and pleading for an intereſt therein? O ſeek to make it up now, and ſay, "O the breadth and length, O the height and depth of the love of Chriſt! Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? What is he, that thou ſhouldſt magnify him, and ſet thy heart upon him?" Strange! that thou ſhouldſt ſet thine heart upon wretches, ſo as to give the glorious Son of thy love to ſuffer all the curſes of the law, and vials of thy wrath; to make us, who are children of wrath, yea, heirs of the curſe, and fire-brands of hell, to become children of God, heirs of the bleſſing, and of eternal life! Surely, while you are thus muſing on the love of God, your hearts, like David's, ſhould wax hot within you, and the fire ſhould burn; nay, the flame of love to God ſhould break out in the moſt lively and active manner: Now

your *ſpikenard ſhould ſend forth the ſmell thereof*; now the ſweet odour of your graces ſhould fill all the houſe.

VI. The evil of ſin, which was the procuring cauſe of Chriſt's ſuffering, ſhould alſo be the ſubject of your thoughts at the Lord's table He had no ſin of his own, but our ſins were laid upon him; and divine juſtice finding them there, took vengeance on our ſurety to the uttermoſt Oh Lord, our ſins were the principal actors of that woeful tragedy: They were the traitors which by the hands of Judas delivered him up to be crucified: Pilate, the Jews, the Romans, were but the executioners of our ſins. Our ſins, with clamours more importunate than all the Jewiſh rabble, cried out, *Crucify him, Crucify him.* What fooliſh inconſiſtent creatures are we, that bewail the event, but redreſs not the cauſe! Alas! we naturally have as great enmity againſt his image, as they had againſt his perſon: They grieved him in his body, we in his Spirit: They opened his wounds, we made them bleed a-freſh. Neither had they got the leaſt power to touch him, if it had not been for our ſins that made him obnoxious to wrath.—Oh, who was it that armed the Jews and Romans againſt him? Who put the ſword in juſtice's hands? Who forced theſe groans and bloody ſweats from my Redeemer? Ah, who but I? My ſins, my pride, my unbelief, my atheiſm, my covetouſneſs, my malice, my lying, cheating, ſwearing ſabbath breaking, &c. Theſe raiſed the ſtorm of wrath againſt my Surety. Blame not Judas, Herod or Pilate, the Jews or Romans, ſo much as my ſins: Nay, I am the Judas that betrayed him, the Herod that mocked him, the Pilate that condemned him, the executioner [illegible] the ſoldier that pierced him.

O my [illegible] Saviour now hanging on the croſs for thy ſins, and yet living. [illegible] that [illegible] that cauſeth it; [illegible] through the goſ- [illegible] perſuaded [illegible] Canſt thou [illegible]

[illegible]

are my friends; and, will you not take my part againſt this deadly enemy? Have not all theſe wounds mouths enough to perſuade you to hate ſin? Oh will you hug my enemy, tear open my wounds, and crucify me afreſh? O communicants, let your hearts anſwer, "No, Lord, I will never requite thy kindneſs ſo, I'll never account that light, which made my Saviour's ſoul heavy unto death; that ſhall not be ſweet to me, that was ſo bitter to him; that ſhall never be my joy, that made Chriſt a man of ſorrows: O ſhall not theſe ſins be forſaken of me, that made him be forſaken of God? Shall ever they be ſuffered to live in me, that would not ſuf- Chriſt to live in the world?"

O what ſtupid creatures are we, if we do not now ſtand aſtoniſhed at the heinouſneſs and hideouſneſs of our ſins, for which no atonement could be made but by the bitter paſſion and agonies of the Son of God! Shall we not ſay, ſurely there muſt be more in ſin than men commonly reckon? It could be no ſmall matter for which the beloved Son of God endured ſuch horrible and dreadful torments. O heavy dead weight of my ſins, that preſſed down my ſtrong Redeemer to the ground; yea, preſſed him down, who upheld the whole fabric of the creation by the word of his power, Heb. i. 3. and, without the leaſt pain, could have borne millions of worlds more! O bitter and curſed ſin, thou ſhalt be crucified this day, that crucified my innocent Saviour! Couldſt thou ever have been guilty of a more horrid deed than murdering of the Lord of glory? I will not reſt this day, till I have revenged my Savour's blood upon thee: Say now of ſin, as the church ſaid of the daughter of Babylon, that enemy and perſecutor of Chriſt myſtically, Pſal. cxxxvii. 8. 9. "O daughter of *Babylon*, who art to be deſtroyed, happy ſhall he be that rewardeth thee as thou haſt ſerved Chriſt: Happy ſhall he be that taketh and daſheth thy little ones againſt the ſtones.

VII. Think on the holineſs and juſtice of God manifeſted againſt ſin, and adore the ſame at this time. You have other mirrors and bright looking-glaſſes in ſcripture for repreſenting the ſame to you, ſuch as the caſting down the angels from heaven, the drowning the

old

old world, the burning of Sodom, the rejection of the Jews! But none of them ſo clearly ſhew forth ſin's evil, and God's ſpotleſs holineſs, and inexorable juſtice, againſt ſin, as do the death and ſufferings of our Redeemer. Come near, and hearken to the raging billows of God's indignation daſhing againſt the Rock of our ſalvation, and behold God's implacable hatred againſt ſin. Many a ſore ſtorm and hurricane of wrath did he endure, to keep the ſea of divine wrath from overflowing you. Our Rock groaned, trembled, and ſwate blood; he cried, prayed, and intreated: Yet divine Juſtice would not hear, nor abate him one ſtripe: "Awake, O ſword of the Lord," cut him off; let him die, ſaith Juſtice, ſeeing he ſtands ſurety for man's ſins. O here is a greater evidence of the inexorableneſs of Juſtice, and God's implacable wrath againſt ſin, than if he had hurled all the rocks of the creation into the midſt of the ſea, or the whole world, full of men and angels, into hell. O you that make light of ſin, go to the rock in Horeb, go to Gethſemane, go to mount Calvary, go to a communion-table, and ſee what Chriſt endured for our ſins, hear his heavy groans, and behold the blood ſtanding above his garments. O communicant, tremble at ſin, and come under the ſhadow of this rock, run into the clefts of it; and, though you hear the roarings and daſhings of this terrible ſea upon your rock, yet you are ſafe here, a drop ſhall not reach you.

Finally, you ought at this time to have ſome thoughts of the "marriage-ſupper of the Lamb" above, whereof this table is an emblem and repreſentation. Here in the wilderneſs we get a foretaſte of the good things of the promiſed land, to ſharpen our appetites after the Canaan above, where theſe firſt fruits do grow and are fully ripe. O what a glorious and well-furniſhed table will that be, where the church of the firſt-born will be all gathered in one general aſſembly, and ſet down together with Chriſt! Oh where are the looks and longings we ſhould have after that heavenly feaſt! Awake, my ſoul, from this dark, deceitful and vexing world: Oh be not in love with thy diſeaſe, thy fetters, and

and calamities: Join not with thoſe that take up their reſt on this ſide Jordan, on this ſide heaven, and who ſay, It is good for us to be here; but with theſe heavenly pilgrims, who ſay, Ariſe, let us depart, this is not our reſt, for it is polluted. Lament your diſtance from God: Woe is me that I ſojourn in Meſhech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar; that I remain in this ſinful polluting place among a ſtrange people, and am ſo long kept from my Father's houſe above "O that I had wings like a dove! Then would I fly away, and be at reſt: Lo, then I would wander far off, and remain in the wilderneſs," that I might be free from ſin's ſnares and temptations, and might have free acceſs to enjoy God. "O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this body of death, which ſo often troubles, diſturbs, entangles, and hinders me from my duty?"

So much for the ſubjects we ought to meditate on at the Lord's table, I come, in the next place,

Secondly, To ſpeak of thoſe graces which are to be employed and exerciſed at the Lord's table; ſuch as, faith, repentance, love, ſpiritual appetite, and thankfulneſs. Now is the time, O communicant, that all your graces ſhould be ſtirred up to the greateſt livelineſs: and therefore do all you can to excite them to it: Chide with them when languiſhing or dull, and ſay, "What, can ye not watch with my deareſt Saviour one hour?"

I. In the firſt place: The grace of faith ſhould be moſt active, for it is moſt neceſſary at this time. Faith may ſay to thee, O communicant, at the table, as Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples, "Without me ye can do nothing." Faith is the eye that ſees Chriſt, the hand that receives him, the mouth that feeds upon him. Let faith's eyes be now opened to ſee the great ſight of Chriſt crucified on the croſs. Do now as Moſes, when he ſaw the buſh burning, Exod. iii. 3. "I'll turn aſide and ſee this great ſight:" Surely you cannot ſee a greater. Behold the rock of our ſalvation ſmitten, to let the water of life come forth to us: Come and ſee him ſmitten by the rod of Moſes, i. e. by the rod of the law, whoſe miniſter Moſes was; with all the curſes and maledictions of the law

law denounced againſt us, Gal. iii. 13. Yea, come ſee him ſmitten by many hands, by the rod of Moſes, by the rod of juſtice, by the rod of devils, by the rod of the Jews, by the rod of the Romans, by the rod of your ſins: Come, ſee him ſmitten in his head with thorns, in his hands with nails, in his ſide with a ſpear, in his heart with ſorrows, yea, in his whole ſoul with the wrath of an angry God. O deep, deep was our rock ſmitten, before the water of life could come forth to heal us; according to Iſa. liii. 5. 8. "He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, bruiſed for our iniquities:—For the tranſgreſſion of my people was he ſtricken, and by his ſtripes we are healed."

Now let faith look ſharply out for Chriſt at the table. Reſt not in the bread and wine, but look beyond theſe; go a little further, and ſee if you can eſpy Chriſt himſelf. Let the language of your heart at this time be, "Saw ye him whom my ſoul loved? Say now to the Lord, as the Greeks to Philip, "Sir, we would ſee Jeſus." Lord, I would now deſire to ſee Jeſus Chriſt: Not all the word nor prayers, miniſters nor elements, will content me without a ſight of Chriſt. Mind what Iſaac ſaid to his father on mount Moriah: "Father, behold here is the wood and the fire; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" So do thou look up at the table to thy heavenly Father, and ſay, "Father, behold, here is the minister, here is the word, here is the bread and wine, but, where is the body and blood of my Saviour? Where is the lamb for a ſacrifice? Father, where is the lamb of God, that takes away the ſins of the world?" Alas, all is nothing to me if he be away. Let me look up and ſay to Chriſt, "Make haſte, my beloved, be thou like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of ſpices. Make no tarrying, O my God; O when will thou come to me?

When Mary came to the ſepulchre, looked in and ſaw the angels but not the Lord, ſhe preſently falls a weeping: all, ſaid ſhe, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him:" My Lord is taken away, and I know not where to find him. When our tender hearted Saviour heard ſuch a moving and mournful complaint, he haſtened to her, and gave her a gracious

meeting

meeting. So, when thou ſeeſt the linen and the elements, but not the Lord Jeſus, then be not ſatisfied, but dart up thy complaints to heaven. "Lord, I came not to ſee the linen, I came not for the bread and wine, but I came to ſee Jeſus; Oh Lord, what ſhall I do? They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where to find him. Ah, what is the word to me without Chriſt, but as a conduit without water? What are the elements to me, but as a cup without wine? Oh Lord, what wilt thou give me, if I go from thy table Chriſtleſs? O, if there were ſuch ſights, ſuch breathings coming from thy heart, thou mighteſt be confident Chriſt would hear them, and make haſte to meet with thee and bleſs thee.

Awake faith, O communicant, at this time; behold Chriſt, apply his benefits. Here a believer may find enough in the wounds and blood of Chriſt, by which he may reſolve all his doubts, ſcatter his fears, ſupply all his ſpiritual wants, and find a remedy againſt all his ſoul-diſtempers, by a believing application thereof to himſelf. When thou putteſt forth the hand of thy body, ſee that thou alſo put forth the hand of thy faith, to receive the body and blood of Chriſt. Do like Joſeph of Arimathea; come to Chriſt crucified, take him down from the croſs, and lay him in the new tomb of thy heart. Now give a hearty, full and unfeigned conſent to Chriſt on the goſpel terms; receive him as thy Saviour, ſubmit to him as thy prince, and ſwear allegiance to him as thy undoubted Sovereign. And remember, faith, if true, muſt have two hands, one to receive Chriſt, and another to give the ſoul to Chriſt; ſee that both hands be now employed, both to take and give.

And, eſpecially, make uſe of faith's mouth to ſuck honey from the rock, derive ſupplies from Chriſt to thy ſoul's neceſſities. Obſerve what God directed Moſes, Exod. xvii. 6. "Behold I will ſtand before thee upon the rock in Horeb, and thou ſhalt ſmite the rock, and there ſhall come water out of it, that the people may drink." Would you have drink and ſupplies from Chriſt for your ſpiritual refreſhment, then ſmite the rock, act

faith on Chriſt. At the table, it would be a man's wiſdom which was Moſes his error, to ſmite this rock oftner than once, Numb xx. 11. "With his rod he ſmote the rock twice, and the waters came out abundantly." So do you ſmite the rock twice, again and again; put forth many acts of faith at this time.

II. The grace of repentance and godly ſorrow for ſin, ſhould be exerciſed at this time. O communicant, canſt thou now look on him whom thou haſt pierced by thy ſins, and not mourn and be in bitterneſs for them? Canſt thou ſee the Son of God hanging naked and bleeding on a tree, upon the top of mount Calvary, as a ſacrifice for thy ſins, and not be grieved for the cauſe? O take a fixed look of him now, and let your eye affect your heart. Behold theſe hands that ſwayed the ſceptre of heaven, now nailed to the tree of reproach: Behold theſe feet that trampled on all the powers of hell, and made his enemies his footſtool, now nailed to the footſtool of the croſs. O did the earth tremble and ſhake, the rocks rend, the graves open, and heavens turn dark at this ſight; and, will not our rocky hearts rend, and our dead ſouls be affected with this ſight? Surely the hardeſt heart among us may now melt, and the dryeſt eyes now drop a tear. O, ſhall the Son of God ſo ſweat and bleed for us, and we not weep for ourſelves? Shall we ſee our ſins pierce his head with thorns, his hands with nails, and his ſide with a ſpear, and yet look on this with unpierced hearts? Oh, our ſins did envenom theſe thorns, theſe nails, and that ſpear. We, and none but we, were the evil beaſt that devoured this Joſeph; we the bloody executioners that tormented the glorious Redeemer; and ſhall not our hearts bleed therefore?

O communicant, ſo behold Chriſt in the ſacrament, as the Virgin Mary his mother beheld him on the croſs: Woman, ſays Chriſt, "behold thy Son." And how did ſhe behold him; Simeon tells her, Luke ii. 35. "That a ſword ſhall pierce through her ſoul." Now was the time that the ſword did pierce through her ſoul, when ſhe beheld him pierced on the croſs: That ſight was like a ſword through her heart: So, when you ſee Chriſt pierced in the ſacrament, it ſhould be like

like a ſword or dagger in your hearts. Obſerve what David ſaid, when he ſaw the people ſlaughtered by the angel's ſword, 2 Sam. xxiv. 7. "Lo, I have ſinned, and I have done wickedly; but as for theſe ſheep, what have they done?" So ſay you at this time, "Lord, I have ſinned, I have done wickedly; but as for this innocent ſpotleſs Lamb, what hath he done?" It is I that have ſinned, but it is thou, O Lord Jeſus, that haſt ſuffered. It was my curſed luſts, my unbelief, my pride, my malice, my covetouſneſs, &c. Theſe were the Judaſes that betrayed thee, theſe the Jews that put thee to death; I have eaten the ſour grapes, but thy teeth were ſet on edge. O what a ſweet temper were it to behold Chriſt with a weeping eye and a melting heart! Oh, ſhall we not ſo much as ſhed tears for theſe ſins, for which we ſee Chriſt ſhedding his blood?

It was laid to the charge of theſe unkind huſbands, Mal. ii. 13 that by their unkindneſſes they cauſed their wives, when they ſhould have been cheerful in God's ſervice, to "cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and with crying out; inſomuch that he regarded not the offering any more, nor received it with good-will at their hands." But, how happy were it for us, if we could be ſo affected with our unkindneſs to Chriſt our huſband, that we could cover the Lord's table with our tears, with weeping and crying out? Then ſurely, in this caſe, the Lord would regard our ſervice the more, and receive our communicating with good will at our hands. Ah, rocky hearts! harder than the nether-millſtone, that cannot diſſolve into tears at the ſight of ſo ſad a ſpectacle as the ſight of Chriſt hanging crucified on the croſs for our ſins. Oh, ſhall we ſee Chriſt's precious blood ſpilt on the earth, running on the ground, and the ground drinking it up, and our hearts not rend therefore? O let us call for tears, for mourning hearts, and ſay, "O that mine head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep for a ſlain Lord!" Smite, Lord; thou canſt bring water out of the rocks, and turn the flint into a ſtanding pool. O that my flinty heart may be touched by the Spirit of God, that the waters may guſh out abundantly! Oh, when

will my heart melt, if not now? urely, now, "Deep calleth unto deep;" *deep ſufferings* in Chriſt for *deep ſorrow* in me. David's kindneſs made even a Saul lift up his voice and weep; and will not Chriſt's kindneſs, which is infinitely greater, make me drop ſome ſilent tears? Was my Saviour's body broken to let his blood out; and ſhall not my heart be broken to let it in? May I now receive a bleeding Saviour with a broken heart!

III. Love is a grace moſt neceſſary at this feaſt, Chriſt's infinite love ſhould now have a return of love from you; ſurely now, when you are muſing on Chriſt's love, your heart, like David's, ſhould burn. O believer, Chriſt died of love to you; and, will you not be ſo much as ſick of love to him? It would be a ſweet and comfortable ſickneſs to you to be ſick of love to him, who died of love to you. You are now come to the fountain of love, you are now at Chriſt's pierced ſide, O look in and ſee his bleeding heart; ſee how it beats and pants with love, and ſee how love flows out in ſtreams of blood, to cleanſe you from your ſins. And, will not this lovely ſight melt your affections, and warm your cold heart to love him? O behold princely Jeſus, the world's Saviour, our lovely Bridegroom, mounted on a bloody croſs upon the top of mount Calvary, for all nations to ſee him and flock to him: O what an engaging ſight is this! Since that mount was firſt created, it never produced ſuch a tree, or ſuch precious fruit as the Lord of glory hanging on the tree of the croſs planted there. This tree of life made mount Calvary a lovely paradiſe that day, notwithſtanding of all the malefactors bones which lay ſcattered upon it.

Now, communicants, can you look upon ſuch a ſight, and not have your hearts inflamed with love? Surely a crucified Jeſus lift upon the croſs, with his arms ſtretched out to embrace loſt ſinners, is the moſt drawing and attractive ſight in the world; for he ſaith himſelf, John xii. 32. "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me," i. e. all ſorts of men, both Jew and Gentile. A crucified Jeſus is a loadſtone of ſtrange virtue, and hath drawn ſome thouſands of iron hearts to him at one ſermon. Now he is lift on high, upon the

the pole of the croſs, and of the ſacrament, that you may look to him. Yea, his face and eyes are towards you; O look communicants; and his voice is, "Behold me, behold me: Look unto me and be ye ſaved, all ye ends of the earth." Poor ſinners of Scotland, of Britain, one of the far off iſlands and outmoſt end of the earth; I have turned my back on the Jews, for they will not be drawn to me; and my face towards you, that you may ſee me and may flock to me.

O will not your hearts be moved and drawn by this lovely ſight of a crucified Redeemer, dying with love in his heart, and ſmiles in his looks towards you? He was moſt lovely when he was on the croſs; and now he is moſt lovely when he is on the throne. O behold King Jeſus with the crown of thorns, wherewith his enemies crowned him, in the day he was a man of ſorrows and acquainted with grief for you: Doth not that ſight affect your hearts with grief, and make you ſad? Then come, behold king Solomon with the crown of glory, wherewith his Father crowned him, when he finiſhed his work, and ſat down on the right hand of his Majeſty on high. Now he is clothed with light, and ſhines brighter than the ſun: Oh will not your hearts love him, whom all the angels and ſaints in heaven do adore, and are raviſhed with his beauty! His high honour and exaltation above doth not in the leaſt alter his affection, or make him forget his people; no, he loves all believers as dearly as ever. How oft doth he call them in the ſong, "My ſiſter, my ſpouſe!" The neareſt affinity in the world is ſpouſe, and the neareſt conſanguinity is ſiſter, to ſhow that Chriſt's affection is like that of the neareſt relations; and, ſhall not Chriſt's great love be anſwered with love again? O never give Chriſt cauſe to complain of you, as Paul of the Corinthians, "The more I love you, the leſs I am beloved," 2 Cor. xii. 15.

O then awake and excite your love now to Chriſt, and ſay, "Lord thou art infinitely lovely, though my heart loves thee not as it ought to do: Lovely and amiable art thou in all the ſteps of thy humiliation: Lovely in thy birth, lovely in thy life, lovely in thy death:

death: lovely with the crown of thorns on thy head, and lovely with the croſs on thy back; lovely in the garden, and lovely on mount Calvary; lovely with the nails in thy hands, and lovely when the ſpear was thruſt in thy ſide And lovely art thou now with the crown of glory on thy head; nay, thou art altogether lovely." O for more love to my lovely Saviour! The apoſtle, when raviſhed with the love of Chriſt, cries out, "If any man love not the Lord Jeſus, let him be Anathema Maranatha. O what a cold unnatural heart muſt that be, that hath no love to this lovely One! O communicant, love him now, when you have ſeen ſuch an engaging ſight of his love: Love him dearly, love him entirely, love him above all, love him more than all. And if you love him, then keep his commandments, delight to pleaſe him, love his ordinances, love his Spirit, love his commands, love his people, and love his very croſs for his ſake.

IV. At this time you ought to awake and excite your ſpiritual appetite after Chriſt and the benefits of his death. You are come to a full feaſt, an inexhauſtible treaſure, and the Maſter of it allows you to partake thereof to the full? There is nothing wanting, then, but a lively feeling of wants, and ſpiritual hunger; had you this, all would be well; for Chriſt fills the hungry with good things. If there be any poor drooping communicants at the table, who are diſcouraged under a ſenſe of their poverty and emptineſs, I may ſay to them, as Jacob to his drooping ſons in a time of great ſcarcity of food, Gen. xlii. 12. "Why do ye look upon one another?" Ye are poor melancholy creatures, all involved in the ſame calamity and diſtreſs; ye may well look to one another, but one of you cannot help another. Well, I have good news to tell you, as Jacob told his ſons: "Behold I have heard there is corn in Egypt," there is bread enough in your Father's houſe, ſufficiency of grace in Chriſt Jeſus for all your wants. O drooping communicant, take heart, and haſten to your brother Joſeph; your elder brother Chriſt is Lord of the country, and hath the

command of all the ſtore-houſes in the land; he will fill your ſacks as much as one can carry. Are thy wants many? He has infinite wealth. Haſt thou no money to buy, no worth to purchaſe? Good news! He ſells "without money and without price: Whoſoever will, may come and drink of the water of life freely." Poor ſoul, cameſt thou hither for bread? Thy gracious Saviour will not give thee a ſtone. He toook notice of thy ſerious preparation for the feaſt; and, do you think he will fruſtrate thine expectation at it? Can you give any inſtances, that ever he ſent any hungry ſoul empty away? No; this would be contrary to his faithful promiſe. I may ſay to thee, as the diſciples ſaid to the blind man, "Be of good cheer, he calleth for thee;" and, if he call for thee, he will not ſend thee empty away. Come away then, hungry ſoul, to a full Redeemer, and get all your wants ſupplied, your deſires ſatisfied. What would you have? "What is thy petition, and what is thy requeſt?" Would you have riches, honours, profits, pleaſures? You have them all here. Would you have all your five ſenſes ſatisfied at once? Come, partake of the feaſt your Redeemer hath provided for you. Would you have your ſenſe of ſeeing ſatisfied? Then, ſaith he, look unto me, behold me, your dying yet ever-living Saviour. Would you have your ſenſe of hearing ſatisfied? Then, ſaith he, "Incline your ear and hearken to me;" hear the ſweet charming voice of your Saviour on the croſs, ſaying, "It is finiſhed." Would you have your ſenſe of taſting ſatisfied? Then, ſaith he, "O taſte and ſee that God is good." Would you have the ſenſe of touching ſatisfied? O then, ſays he, "Reach hither thy finger, and feel the print of the nails; reach hither thy hand, and thruſt it into my ſide." Would you have the ſenſe of ſmelling ſatisfied? Then come to him, "Whoſe garments ſmell of myrrh, aloes and caſſia; and whoſe name is like ointment poured forth." O what a matchleſs perſon is this, that can ſo richly ſupply all your needs? I tell you again, if you go away without ſupply, it will be for want of a lively ſenſe of your needs, and of panting deſires after Chriſt and his fulneſs.

Awake

Awake, holy deſires and thirſtings of ſoul, and ſay, Lord, "Let not the needy be forgotten, nor the expectation of the poor periſh for ever." Let not a thirſty ſoul periſh at the wells of ſalvation. O happy were I, if at this time I could get a ſealed pardon of my ſins! "O bleſſed is he whoſe iniquities are forgiven, and whoſe ſin is covered!" Lord, whatever thou deny me in the world, do not deny me this choice bleſſing. O for a token for good at this time of Chriſt's own hand! May I receive a plentiful effuſion of the graces of his Spirit into my heart. O that my luſts and corruptions may be mortified and ſubdued! May I be enabled to do all my duties better than I have done. May I be more watchful over my heart, my tongue, and all my ways, than ever I have been: O that my ſoul may depart much bettered much revived, comforted and ſtrengthened, from this holy ordinance!

V. Awake your thankfulneſs to God at this time for redeeming love; join with the Pſalmiſt, and ſay, "Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me bleſs his holy name. Thanks be to God for his unſpeakable gift: What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all his gifts and benefits unto me? Let me ſpeak of the glorious honour of his Majeſty, and declare his wondrous works." You ſhould now be in Mary's frame, to ſing and ſay, as in Luke i. 46. "My ſoul doth magnify the Lord, and my ſpirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour:" And in Zechariah's frame, to ſay with him, Luke i. 68. "Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, for he hath viſited and redeemed his people." The Ancients called the Lord's ſupper ſtill the Euchariſt, *i. e.* the thankſgiving, becauſe the great deſign of it is to keep up the thankful remembrance of God's redeeming love; and believers in partaking of it ſhould, with their whole ſouls, give thanks unto God for his unſpeakable gift, and ſing glory to God in the higheſt And, for our example herein, our Redeemer both began this inſtitution with the giving of thanks, and ſinging hymns of praiſe. The Jews at their paſſover did ſing the cxiii. Pſalm, with the five following pſalms, which they called the great Hallelujah A Chriſtian ſhould in every thing and at all times give thanks; but at the ſacrament

the

e great Hallelujah muſt be ſung. If ever the heart tuned for the work of praiſe, it ſhould be now; r greater matter for it you cannot have on this ſide heaven, than at this occaſion. The great exhorta- n the Ancients gave at the communion table was, *ſum corda*, up with your hearts, communicants; ele- e them to God in thankfulneſs and praiſe. Invite angels and the whole creation to help you to bleſs d for Jeſus Chriſt the mercy of mercies.

ome further Meditations on the Sacramental Elements, Actions and Words.

BESIDES what I have ſaid, the ſacramental elements, ions and words, may afford ſuitable ſubject of me- ation to communicants while they ſit at the Lord's le, and may be improven for the quickening and up- ring of the ſacramental graces above mentioned. d here I ſhall give ſome few inſtances for the aſſiſt- ce and direction of weaker Chriſtians.

When you ſee the elements of bread and wine ſet on the table, think on Chriſt's goodneſs and conde- enſion in appointing theſe outward ſigns to confirm ur faith, and excite your affections: They are not ſtly things, Chriſt would not be burdenſome to his ople with any of his ordinances. Think how fitly ey repreſent the body and blood of our Redeemer. read, ere it be fit to nouriſh us, muſt be firſt ſown d die in the earth; then it muſt be threſhen, grinded the mill, baken in the oven, broken and eaten: So hriſt, that he might be a fit Saviour to us, was content die, and be bruiſed for our ſins, and ſcorched in the en of his Father's wrath. Bread is the moſt neceſſary ing in the world; it ſtrengthens man's heart; it is e ſtaff that upholds his life: So Chriſt is the mercy of ercies, the moſt uſeful and neceſſary bleſſing to our arving ſouls. Wine, ere it be fit for our uſe, muſt be ueezed out of the grave, and this muſt be trodden and uiſed in the wine preſs: So Chriſt was cruſhed in the ine-preſs of his Father's wrath, till the bleſt juice of s body, his precious blood, did guſh out in abundance

for the redemption of our ſouls. No liquour ſo ſ… wine for cheering the fainting ſpirits, Pſal. civ. … there is nothing can refreſh the drooping ſoul ſo … as the blood of Chriſt.

Though bread and wine be common things of t… ſelves, yet they are highly valuable in reſpect of … ſignificancy and ends. A little wax, though in itſ… ſmall value, yet, when affixed to a charter, it ſerv… confirm our right and title to a great inheritance; … theſe elements, when conſecrated and given to us … Chriſt's ambaſſadors, are to us a ſeal of God's coven… and confirm our title to all Chriſt's purchaſe.

When we ſee the miniſter take the bread, think h… God did chuſe and take Chriſt from among men to b… our Mediator, and a ſacrifice for our ſins.

When the miniſter ſets apart, bleſſes, and conſecra… the bread, think how God ſet apart and ſent his S… ſanctified and furniſhed with all gifts and graces nec… ful to his mediatory office.

When you ſee the conſecrated bread and wine expo… ed to open view, think how God in his infinite mercy … "hath ſet forth Jeſus Chriſt as a propitiation through … faith in his blood," Rom. iii. 25. Behold how "evi… dently Chriſt crucified is ſet forth before your eyes." Behold the lamb opening the ſeals, the ſeal of God's covenant, the ſeal of God's treaſures, the ſeal of the fountain of life, and the ſeal of heaven's gates; all which were ſhut before, till Chriſt came to open them. Suppoſe now you hear that voice, Rev. vi. "Come and ſee." Open the eyes of faith, and ſee a great ſight. What is to be ſeen here? You may, O communicant, ſee here the heinous nature of ſin, the ſeverity of divine juſtice, the miſery of the damned, the deſervings of unbelievers: You may ſee the devil conquered, juſtice ſatisfied, a flame of love kindled in Chriſt's heart that many waters could not quench: You may ſee the clefts of the rock opened, and a ſanctuary found out: You may ſee the precioufneſs of ſouls, the price of pardon, and the worth of heaven. Chriſt's body and blood, which were given for them, do ſhew that they are things of no ſmall value.

When

When you ſee the elements, you have cauſe to bleſs God, and rejoice at the ſight of this precious ſign and ſeal of God's covenant of grace and ſalvation. We ſhould rejoice to ſee the rainbow in the cloud, a ſign of God's covenant, and promiſe to ſecure the world againſt a deſtroying deluge: Much more ſhould we joy to ſee the ſign of God's confirming his covenant with believers, ſecuring them againſt the overflowing of God's wrath. If it ſtill rained, and never a rainbow appeared, we might have reaſon to fear: So, if we never ſaw this ordinance and ſeal of God's covenant, we might ſuſpect danger: But, O believer, you ſee God is faithful and willing to keep covenant; there is the rainbow appearing; a pleaſant ſight to a guilty ſinner!

When you ſee the miniſter lay his hand on the bread, lift up your ſoul and pray, "That God may lay his hand on your diſeaſed ſoul, that all your diſtempers may depart from you: Lord, lay hold on my ſoul, as the angel did upon Lot; ſave me from the flames of wrath, cauſe me to eſcape out of Sodom into the mount of God, and clefts of the rock, that I periſh not."

When you ſee the bread broken, think on the breaking and tormenting of Chriſt's body, and the bruiſing of his ſoul for our ſins. He ſuffered a double death, one in his ſoul, and another in his body; he ſuffered from men and devils: But all that was nothing to what he ſuffered from his Father; for, when men were wounding his body, the Father's hand bruiſed his ſoul, made a thouſand wounds therein, and poured in a whole ocean of wrath upon him: he brake him with breach upon breach, and overwhelmed him with one wave of vengeance upon the back of another, till all his billows went over him. This was a ſad time to our Saviour: yet all theſe floods could not drown his love to us, nor make him quit the grip he had taken of us, but, come of him what will, his poor people muſt not periſh; his love to them flamed higheſt when his ſufferings were greateſt.

You ſhould, at this time, deſire to be in the ſame frame, as if you had been at Golgotha ſtanding at the foot of the croſs, and had ſeen the blood trickling down, and heard all the dying groans of the Lamb of God. O

ſhall we ſee the bleſſed Son of God, the brightneſs of his Father's glory, with his eyes dim, his cheeks wan, his face pale, his head bowing, his heart fainting, his ſide bleeding, his wounds open to ſhelter us, and his love ſtreaming forth in blood to us; I ſay, ſhall we ſee all this, and our affections not raiſed, our love not kindled, and our hearts not concerned! O what a monſtrous thing will it be, to ſee our affections and graces at the loweſt ebb, when there is a high ſtream-tide of the love and blood of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt flowing towards us!

Take a view of Jeſus on the croſs breathing forth love to us, when he was breathing forth his laſt: Let us look ſtreightly and ſtedfaſtly to him, as he did to us. Many write, that he was crucified with his face toward the weſt: The Jews did it out of deſpite, as reckoning him unworthy to look on the temple and holy city that ſtood on the eaſt of mount Calvary; but he had a gracious meaning and deſign to us thereby, and now was that word remarkably fulfilled, Pſal. lxvi. 7. "His eyes behold the nations:" For now his eyes looked to us Gentiles, when he was upon the croſs; and O it was an eye of love and pity he caſt then upon us: And ſhall not this encourage us to lift up an eye of faith to him upon the croſs for healing and ſalvation? Eſpecially ſeeing he calls us to do it, Iſa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth." And it is to be obſerved, that Chriſt in this call hath a ſpecial eye to us in Scotland, who were then Gentiles, and are likewiſe among the ends of the earth. O ſhall we, in this land and corner of the world, have ſuch a loving invitation to look to a crucified Saviour for mercy, and will we neglect it? Behold his arms ſtretched out to embrace you, and will you not deſire to flee into them? Behold him bowing his head on the croſs, to take a view of your wounds, and whiſper comfort into your ears: Behold him opening a window in his ſide to take you into his heart, and pouring out blood thence to redeem you, and water to cleanſe you, a fountain both for your juſtification and ſanctification.

Again,

Again, when you ſee the bread broken, look to Chriſt's wounds as an open city of refuge for thy ſoul that is purſued by juſtice to take ſanctuary in: His wounds are laid open, that you may ſee into his bleeding heart, and ſee his yearning bowels of mercy, and hear them ſounding towards you, an object of pity and ſpectacle of miſery Poor ſhelterleſs ſoul, quit all other ſhelters, and flee to the clefts of the rock here opened, ſaying, "This is my reſt, and here I will ſtay."

Pray at this time, "Lord, may my hard heart be broken and melted, that I may in ſome meaſure be conformed to my broken Saviour:" Or, "Lord, break the united forces of my ſins, and ſcatter them by thy mighty arm"

When you ſee the miniſter offering the bread to the communicants, and hear him ſaying, "Take ye, eat ye," &c. think how freely God offers his Son, and Chriſt offers himſelf to be ours: Think how you ſee him at the head of the table, making offer of himſelf to you, ſaying, "Take me, and the whole purchaſe of my blood; take my ſealed teſtament, and all the legacies in it; take a ſealed pardon of all your ſins, and a ſealed right to eternal life."

When you receive the bread into your hand, ſee that you ſtretch forth the hand of faith to receive and embrace Chriſt crucified, as your bleeding High-prieſt, to make atonement for you; ſay with your heart, "Content, Lord, even ſo I take thee, and ſeal a covenant with thee, I claſp about thee as mine; I believe, Lord, help my unbelief" If Chriſt be not received by faith in this ordinance, there is nothing done but what is ill. O will you come to this table and receive the bread of the Lord and not receive the bread, the Lord? O it will be ſad, it will be bitter at death, or judgment; when you come to die, you will cry, "Lord, receive my ſoul:" Well, may not Chriſt anſwer you, "I will juſt receive your ſoul as you received my body in the ſacrament, when you was intreated, and that was not at all?" O then conſider what Chriſt has done for you, and the abſolute neceſſity you ſtand in of him, and

receive

receive him into your ſouls. O will you not accept of a bruiſed Lord, a bruiſed friend, when he is knocking, with the croſs on his back, the nails in his hands, and ſpear in his ſide! Can you find in your hearts to hold him at the door, in this poſture? Will you not open your hearts to him, who opened his ſide to you?

When you are making uſe of this bread, praiſe and magnify God for providing this heavenly manna, to keep your ſoul from periſhing: Bleſs him for this feaſt, and feed on it that you may live: Apply Chriſt and his benefits for the nouriſhing your ſouls, and ſtrengthening your graces: Bleſs him for this noble contrivance and undertaking. Rejoice in Chriſt, that hath found out a way, by his death, to reconcile an angry God to you, and procure you acceſs to his table, that you may feaſt with him. With what joy and thankfulneſs did the Iſraelites go forth to gather manna; that bread which God ſent them from heaven: But, O here is a better manna come from heaven: Will ye not be thankful for it, and run with deſire to get it? The Iſraelites manna could not give life to the dead; but here is manna that can reſtore and preſerve life both; yea, give everlaſting life to both ſoul and body. The Iſraelites manna fell not on the Sabbath, and they might not go to gather it that day: But, bleſſed be God, this manna falls every day, and double on the Sabbath, and welcome are ye to gather it this day; for Chriſt now rains it in greater plenty, and calls you to be more diligent on it than on other days. His table is well furniſhed with manna this day: O feed and refreſh your ſouls well before you leave it, and ſtrive to preſerve the reliſh of it when you are gone. Cry now with theſe, John vi. 34. "Lord, evermore give us this bread." This bread both ſatisfies the ſoul, and creates an appetite; O for a perpetual hunger for it! It is the ſame bread the glorified ſaints do feed on for evermore: In heaven they never lothe this manna, nor weary of it, as the Iſraelites did of theirs. It is but a ſmall crumb, O communicants, you get of it here, to that eternal feaſt provided above.

Again,

Again, bread, in ſcripture, is called, the ſtaff of bread. O this is the true ſtaff of bread; here bread, if eaten, by faith, that will prove a ſtaff to ſupport you, a ſtaff to defend you, a ſtaff to beat your enemies, and put all your luſts to flight: This is a ſtaff that will enable you to run in God's way, "and fight the armies of the aliens."—That is a ſtrange dream that one of the Midianitiſh hoſt had, when Gideon was coming upon them, Judges vii. 13. "Behold, a cake of barley bread came tumbling into the hoſt of Midian, and ſmote a tent," &c. Strange! a piece of bread overturned a tent. Lo, that dream is interpreted in this ſacrament: Here a piece of bread, O communicant, if eaten by faith, that will tumble into the hoſt of Satan, and thy luſts, theſe Midianites, which have long vexed you with their wiles, ſtrike down their tents, and put them all to flight. Surely, a view here, by faith, of Chriſt's body pierced and nailed by ſin, will turn a believer's heart againſt ſin, as the moſt hateful thing in the world: Let ſin flatter as it will, he will never forget what it hath done to his dear Saviour. This is both quickening and killing bread; for, as it is life to your ſouls, ſo it is poiſon to your luſts.

When you ſee the wine poured out, think how freely and willingly Chriſt ſuffered for you. He poured out his blood as freely as the wine is poured out to you; yea, it is ſaid, Iſa. liii. 12. "He poured out his ſoul unto death," as freely as we pour water out of a veſſel. He had freely emptied his veins in the garden, and on the croſs; every pore became an eye to weep blood for your ſakes: He is wounded over all, that his blood may run the more plentifully and freely; and, when he hath no more blood to pour out, he next pours out his ſoul for you: And, would you have any more from your loving Saviour? O did he pour out his ſoul unto death, and will you not pour out your ſouls into his boſom!

Again, when you ſee it, by faith, behold the wells of ſalvation now opened, the ſtone rolled away, and the fountain of the water of life running freely, and following poor ſinners. O run not away from it, but turn to it;

it; drink, and live for evermore. O ſhall the fountain of life be opened, and the mouths of your ſouls faſt ſhut! Can you ſee Chriſt's blood running, and not deſire to be bathed with it? Haſt thou blind eyes or lame feet, weak hands or feeble knees, a cold or hard heart, a feared or doubting ſoul? Here a cure for all thy diſeaſes. Thou art now at the ſide of the pool, juſt at the healing waters, one ſtep will bring you to them: Look to Chriſt for ſtrength, ſtir up your ſouls, ſtep in, drink, bathe, and be made whole for ever.

When you drink the cup, remember the precious blood of Chriſt; eye it by faith, plead it with God, and apply it to your ſouls: Thirſtily drink it by the mouth of faith: Say, "I am an unrighteous creature, but here is juſtifying blood; my heart is polluted, but here is ſanctifying blood; my ſoul is wounded, but here is healing blood: My luſts are ſtrong and lively, but here is mortifying blood; my heart is very dead, but here is quickening blood; it is very hard, but here is ſoftening blood: O, ſhall not a drop of this blood light on my hard heart? O let me not miſs a cure, when the balm of Gilead is among my hands! This blood healed thouſands, and ſhall my plagues continue? Lord, may that innocent blood, that dropt from thy hands and thy ſide, waſh away all the ſpots and ſtains of my guilty ſoul."

As you find the wine warm on your cold ſtomach, ſo let the love and blood of Chriſt warm your cold heart and affections with vehement love and deſire to him. Shall Chriſt's heart be hot as fire to you, and will your's be cold as ice to him? Can you feel his warm and bleeding heart, and not cry out with Thomas, "My Lord, and my God?" How ſhall I expreſs my love to my loving and lovely Jeſus, who loved me and gave himſelf for me? How dearly, Lord, haſt thou purchaſed my love, unworthy as it is? What hath the world or ſin to do with that which Chriſt hath bought ſo dear! O for a heart ready to burſt with love to him that is only worthy to be the object of it! O for a live coal from God's altar to kindle the flame, that many waters might not quench! Worſe am I than a beaſt, if I be not raviſhed with Chriſt's matchleſs love.

When

When you ſee the elements divided and diſtributed among the communicants, believe it, that Chriſt is really, though inviſible, dealing forth the effects and benefits of his death and ſufferings to the worthy receivers.

When you ſee both the bread and the wine given, think that God is offering and giving Chriſt, and all Chriſt unto us; and we muſt be willing to take Chriſt and all that is in him, all his benefits, all his offices, all his laws, and all his croſs he thinks fit to lay on us.

When the bread and wine are offered to you, and you hear Chriſt ſaying, *Take, eat, drink;* O then caſt open all the doors and gates of your ſoul, that "the King of glory may enter in:" Say, "Come in, thou bleſſed of the Lord; wherefore ſtandeſt thou without? As I receive the bread of the Lord into my mouth, let me receive the bread, the Lord, into my ſoul. Lord, it was my errand to receive thee into my heart, let me not go without thee." Stir up faith mightily, to receive Chriſt and all his benefits. Stretch out faith's arms as far and as wide as you may, to welcome, embrace, and claſp about your Saviour, and ſay, "My beloved is mine, and I am his:" Now may the marriage be ſealed and ratified, and the knot caſt which ſhall never be looſed again: And happy, happy for ever is my choice, rich is my portion, my ſoul is made up to all eternity

When you are eating and drinking the bread and wine, let your ſoul be buſy making cloſe and particular application by faith of Chriſt and all his benefits, according to your various neceſſities. And conſider, that as, by eating and drinking, your food incorporates with your bodies, and turns one with you; ſo Chriſt by faith is myſtically united to you, and you are made one with Chriſt: As the broken bread enters into your body, and becomes your's by feeding upon it; ſo you are to believe, that as truly Chriſt's broken body, and the purchaſe of his blood, are applied to you for curing and ſaving your ſoul, and that all his merits and graces are your's by faith; "This is my body that was broken for you." Again, as eating and drinking of

proper food is very pleaſant to our bodies, ſo we o... to take great ſatisfaction and complaceney in parta... of Chriſt and his benefits Let us ſatiate ourſelves, ... taſting of his goodneſs, and feaſting on his hea... dainties. And as by our earthly food our bodies ... ſtrengthened for labour, ſo by this ſpiritual food our ſ... and our graces are nouriſhed and ſtrengthened for t... duties of religion.

Again, you are to look upon theſe ſacramental acti... as a mutual giving and taking paſſine and infeftment b... twixt Chriſt and your ſouls. Hereby you get infeftme... of a crucified Chriſt, his great purchaſe and glorious i... heritance; and hereby Chriſt takes infeftment of you... ſoul and body, to be his children, his heirs, his ſervan... and ſoldiers, to obey him and fight for him while you... live. You are hereby conſecrate to be temples for hi... ſervice and reſidence; beware of defiling the temple of the Lord, ſuffer not a herd of ſwiniſh luſts to enter therein, leſt God abhor you and caſt you off for ever.

When you hear theſe words of the inſtitution, "This cup is the New Teſtament in my blood: This do in remembrance of me: Conſider why it is called a Teſtament; it is becauſe in his ordinance we have Chriſt's teſtament and latter will ſealed, wherein he leaves many a rich legacy to his poor friends: And here he gives a ſealed copy of his teſtament into every one of their hands.

Queſt. "What are the legacies he leaves?"

Anſ. Pardon, peace, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, redemption, grace, and glory.

Queſt. "But how ſhall I know if I have any intereſt herein?"

Anſ. Are you one of Chriſt's poor relations? Can you claim any ſibneſs to him by faith and regeneration? Then your name is in Chriſt's Teſtament.

Queſt. "But how ſhall I be ſure that the Teſtament is in force, and will be execute?"

Anſ. It is become of force by the death of the Teſtator, who died, and left his Teſtament in the hands of the bleſſed Spirit to be executor of it, and to apply it to thoſe the Teſtator appointed: Yea, (bleſſed be God, the

the Teſtator is riſen again, and lives to ſee the execution of it himſelf likewiſe.

Queſt. "But, will I get all Chriſt's purchaſe and legacies juſt now?"

Anſ. You ſhall be infeft, and have your right ſecured to all this great eſtate left by Chriſt's will to you; and out of it you ſhall have a preſent maintenance, till the time appointed come, when you ſhall enter into the full poſſeſſion of the inheritance. You are but minors yet, and not fit to be intruſted with it; but it is ſecured in good hands for you, till you come to full age. In the meantime, you hear the dying Teſtator leaves a charge upon you, to "do this in remembrance of him." Think on him and his love to you; think what he has contrived, what he has promiſed, what he has done, what he is ſtill doing, and what he is about to do for you: Remember him who remembered you in your loweſt eſtate, and is ſtill remembering you: Remember him that is coming again quickly in the clouds, to meet you, take you home to his palace, and put you in poſſeſſion of all. He commands you to ſhew his death till he come again.

When you hear of his coming again, conſider what a glorious coming and glad meeting that will be. O believer, you now ſee Chriſt only through theſe elements by an eye of faith, but then you ſhall ſee him by an eye of immediate viſion, you ſhall ſee him even as he is; and O how mightily ſurpriſed will you be at the ſight! You will ſay, as the Queen of Sheba ſaid of Solomon, The half was not told me when I was in my own country; but, "Behold a greater than Solomon is here."

Before you riſe from the table, you may think on Elijah's cake baken on the coals, and his cruſe of water, in the ſtrength of which meat he went forty days and forty nights till he came to Horeb, the mount of God, 1 Kings xix. 6. 8. Think how much more ſubſtantial, durable and nouriſhing the food is that thou haſt been partaking of, and bleſs God for it. Elijah is twice there wakened to take a double meal; and ſo ought you to rouſe up and provoke your ſpiritual appetite to take another morſel ere you go; you ſhould feed plentifully

at Chriſt's table. It is a virtue to be a holy glutton at this feaſt: You know not if ever you get another feaſt like this, till you come to the mount of God above; this may be your laſt communion here, and the laſt time you ſhall drink of the fruit of the vine in this manner; take a large fill to ſtrengthen your ſoul for your journey, you know not what blaſts and ſtorms may blow by the way: You have a ſiege to hold out, take in proviſions here; you have a voyage to go, ſee that you victual your ſhip: Death will try and put all your graces to it. The wiſeſt virgins have no grace to ſpare at the coming of the Bridegroom: What ſtorms of temptations and difficulties do many poor ſaints meet with on a death-bed? It is with much ado they put ſafe into the harbour at laſt: O then gather manna while it is falling, for your gathering time may be loſt.

Conſider, that, while you are at the table, you are near Chriſt your Phyſician; therefore be ſenſible of your maladies and look up to him with your finger on your ſore, and cry with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. xli. 4. "Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my ſoul, for I have ſinned againſt thee." Now the balm of Gilead is among my hands, and it will be ſad if I ſhould miſs a cure. The blood of Chriſt, that hath healed thouſands, is now at hand; Oh let not my plagues continue with me. O let a drop of that precious blood light on my cold, deed, and hard heart, that ſome heat, life and ſoftneſs may be got and preſerved therein.

You are come to Chriſt on a good day, when he is on a throne of grace with a ſceptre of mercy in his hand; ſee that you make all your wants known to him. A feaſting time is a time of granting requeſts: "What is thy petition, and what is thy requeſt, Queen Eſther?" ſaid king Ahaſuerus at the banquet of wine. So ſaid King Jeſus to the worthy communicant at his royal feaſt, "What is thy petition, and what is thy requeſt? What will ye that I ſhall do unto you?" as Chriſt aſked the blind men, Mat. xx. 32. Let your requeſts be like thoſe of the Pſalmiſt, "Conſider, and hear me, O Lord my God; lighten mine eyes, leſt I ſleep the ſleep of death, Pſal. xiii. 3. Let my ſoul live, and it ſhall praiſe thee,

thee, Pſal. cxix 1[illegible]. Purge me with hyſſop, and I ſhall be clean; wash me, and I ſhall be whiter than ſnow, Pſal. li. 7. Reſtore unto me the joy of thy ſalvation, and uphold me with thy free ſpirit." Pſal. li. 12. Or, you may put ſome of the Spouſe's petitions at this time, "Draw me, we will run after thee, Cant. i. 4. Awake, O northwind, come thou ſouth, blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleaſant fruits, Cant. iv. 16. Make haſte, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or young hart upon the mountains of ſpices." Cant viii. 14.

O communicant, thou art near to a crucified Chriſt when at the table, as the penitent thief near to him when on the croſs; he got mercy from Chriſt when he ſought it, and ſo may you, if you ſeek it with the ſame frame of heart. Cry, Lord, look on a poor ſinner at thy table, as thou didſt on him that hang on the croſs. "Lord, Remember me, now thou art in thy kingdom." Thy wounds are open now; Lord, ſhelter me in them. Thy blood is running freſh: O bathe my deceaſed ſoul in this fountain, that I may be whole for ever. So much for the ſecond head of directions. I now proceed to the third head.

CHAP. III.

Concerning a Communicant's Behaviour after Partaking, and when the Communion Sabbath is over.

IN diſcourſing this head, I propoſe to do theſe following things: 1. To give ſome directions concerning your deportment when riſing and going from the Lord's table. 2 Concerning your carriage when you go home to your cloſets and retiring places. 3. Concerning your behaviour and converſation in the world when all the work is over.

SECT.

Sect. I. Containing Directions concerning your Deportment when Riſing and Going from the Lord's Table.

BELIEVERS are ſometimes ready to ſay, "It is good for us to be here, let us build tabernacles, and dwell ſtill." But this table, though it be ſatisfying, it is not laſting; though the meal be ſweet, it is ſhort. All things here below are tranſitory, and communions are paſſing things with the reſt. You muſt riſe and go down from the mount, and return to the world, and travel in the wilderneſs again. Oh, may the believer ſay, "And muſt I riſe, and go back to that unſatisfying and ſoul-ſtarving world again? What ſhall I do there, if my Redeemer go not alongſt with me? Lord, take me by the hand, lead me, uphold me, and be thou ſtill with me; and at laſt bring me to that endleſs feaſt thou haſt prepared for thy people above, where I may ever lye in thy boſom, under the interrupted beams of thy ſmiling and cheering countenance, and for ever feed my hungry ſoul on thy bleſſed ſelf, without the help of ſymbols or ſacraments, and where the gueſts will be never called to riſe from that glorious table any more."

Queſt. What is that frame and diſpoſition of ſoul that we ſhould have in riſing and going from the Lord's table?

Anſ. With reſpect to that obſerve the following directions:

You ought to riſe and go from the table.

I. In a wondering and admiring frame. Continue to wonder at the love of God in giving his beloved Son to die a curſed death for us. Though he loved him moſt dearly, yet he wounded him moſt deeply, that his precious blood might ſtream forth and ſave us. Hence it is ſaid, Iſa. liii. 10. "It pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him." Junius reads it, *Valde delectatus eſt*; i. e. He was exceedingly delighted in it. Strange! other parents, whoſe love to their children is nothing in compariſon of the Father's love to Chriſt, do follow their children

to

to their graves with many tears, eſpecially when they die violent deaths: But the infinite God delighteth in the painful and bloody death of his only Son, becauſe it tended to the ſalvation of believers: He willingly gave his own dear Son, to die a ſhameful curſed death, that you might live a glorious bleſſed life for ever. O what manner of love is this! And what art thou, O believer, that thou ſhouldſt be the object of this love more than others? By nature thou art mean as the worm, vile as the mire, black as hell, and a child of wrath even as others: And thou hadſt now been wallowing in ſin, with the worſt of the world, if free grace had not renewed thee; nay, thou hadſt been roaring in hell at this hour, if free grace had not reprieved thee. Look about thee, and ſee others refuſed, when thou art choſen; others polluted, when thou art ſanctified; others put off with common gifts, when thou haſt ſpecial graces. Though you and they perhaps ſat together in the ſame deſk hearing the word, or at the ſame table receiving the ſacrament; yet free grace came and made the difference: "One is taken, and the other left." Here is matter for your admiration.

The conſideration of this free love and diſtinguiſhing mercy of God ſhould make thee ſay with David, "Lord, what am I, and what is my houſe, that thou haſt brought me hitherto? What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And, what am I, the worſt of men, that thou ſhould be thus mindful of me?" O how did Mephibosheth admire David's kindneſs, when he ſpake familiarly with him, and ſaid, "Thou ſhalt eat bread at my table continually?" 2 Sam. ix. 7. Obſerve his anſwer, ver. 8: "What is thy ſervant, that thou ſhouldſt look upon ſuch a dead dog as I am?" But ſurely, O believer, thou haſt much more reaſon to ſay ſo, and wonder that ſuch a mean creature ſhould be ſet at the table of the great God, and honoured to feaſt with himſelf. Lord, what am I, that thou ſhouldſt have noticed the like of me? Better deſerved I to have been howling among the dogs without the door, than to be let in and feaſted among thy friends; I better deſerved to have been roaring in hell with devils, than to be ſet

at thy table to rejoice with thy children. Lord, when thou waſt pleaſed to look on me with an eye of pity, and embrace me in the arms of thy tender mercy; thou mighteſt juſtly have ſpurned my guilty ſoul into hell, ſaying, "Depart from me, I know you not." What a wonder of mercy is it, that I, who have forfeited all mercies, and deſerved ſuch a ſentence as that in Jer. ix. 15. to be fed with wormwood, and to have water of gall to drink, ſhould nevertheleſs have the fleſh of the Son of God given me to be my meat, and his blood to be my drink? The Lord Jeſus might juſtly have ſaid unto me, as in Zech. xi. 9. "I will not feed you: That which dieth, let it die; and that which is to be cut off, let it be cut off." But, O how tender are his bowels, how compaſſionate his heart! Rather than my ſoul ſhould ſtarve, he is content to be ſlain that his fleſh might become my food.

II. Riſe and go from the table in a thankful and praiſing frame. Thankfulneſs well becomes this euchariſtical feaſt, which is mainly deſigned as a thankſgiving to God for redeeming love. On this occaſion you ought to "bleſs God in the congregation, even the Lord from the fountain of Iſrael," Pſal. lxviii. 26. Now, you ſhould ſtir up your ſouls, and all that is within you, to bleſs his holy name, with the Pſalmiſt, Pſ. ciii. 1. 2. 3. "Now you ſhould with the angels ſing, Glory to God in the higheſt, that there is on earth peace, and good-will towards men," Luke ii. 14. "Now you ſhould with John, ſing praiſe to him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his blood," Rev. i. 15.

Oh, may the worthy communicant ſay, How ſhall I mention the loving kindneſs and praiſes of the Lord, according to the multitude of his loving kindneſſes, and according to all he hath beſtowed on me, and his great goodneſs to the houſe of Iſrael? O that I could proclaim thy love to all the world, and make the whole earth ring with thy praiſes! O that I could ſing praiſes to him that loved me: To him that made the world, and furniſhed it ſo richly for me to dwell in: To him that made my body ſo wonderfully, and gave me a ſoul ſo capable to ſerve and enjoy him: To him that remembered

membered me in my low eſtate, and laid aſide his glory, took on my nature, and paid my debt on the croſs: To him that ſent his Spirit to quicken me when dead in my ſins, that opened mine eyes, bowed my will, and turned me from darkneſs to light: To him who forgives my iniquities, heals my diſeaſes, redeems my life from deſtruction, and crowns me with loving-kindneſs: To him that hath endured from me many ſlights, put up with many affronts, and waited on me with infinite patience; even "to him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, and made us kings and prieſts to God his Father, a note the angels themſelves cannot ſing; and to him that is able to keep us from falling, and to preſent us faultleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy, be glory, majeſty, and dominion, now and for evermore! O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever. Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can ſhew forth all his praiſe? Now bleſſed be his glorious name for ever: Let the whole earth be filled with his glory."

And, O believer, remember that you only begin this duty of ſinging praiſe in this world, for eternity itſelf will not end it: Endleſs eternity will be ſhort enough for this glorious work of praiſe. You ought to be acquainting yourſelf much with this work while here, that you be not a ſtranger to it hereafter. Reſolve with David not only to begin it, but to perſiſt and hold on in it alſo, Pſal. cxlv. 2. "Every day will I bleſs thee, and I will praiſe thy name for ever and ever;" as if he had ſaid, I'll begin it now, and do it every day while here, in hopes that I will ſpend a whole eternity in it hereafter. Again, he ſays, Pſal. cxlvi. 2. "While I live, I will praiſe the Lord; I will ſing praiſes unto my God, while I have any being." And when I have no longer being on earth, I hope to have a being in heaven, where I ſhall praiſe him to better purpoſe; and wherein, Lord, I am deficient now in thy due praiſe, I will pay it hereafter in everlaſting Hallelujahs. O communicant, haſt thou not great ground to praiſe this day, that thou liveſt not among the dark Pagans, that never heard tell of Jeſus Chriſt? That thou art not among the fallen angels, for whom a ſacri-

fice was never provided? That thou art not among the damned in hell, who are without the reach of mercy, and of hearing the joyful ſound? You have been ſet at a full table, when others ſuffer an everlaſting famine. And, what will you render to the Lord for this diſtinguiſhing love and undeſerved goodneſs? I have good ground to caution you againſt unthankfulneſs, as Moſes did the Iſraelites upon the view of their entry into Canaan, Deut. viii. 10. 11. "When you have eaten and are full, forget not to bleſs God for the good land that he hath given you;" that you have a Goſhen on earth, and the proſpect of a Canaan above: Bleſs him for a land of light that you dwell in, and for the rich table that he covers for you: Bleſs God for a ſacrament day, for it is one of the days of heaven; it is a day you ought highly to prize, and to praiſe God for. They that know the worth of this day could wiſh, with Joſhua, that the ſun ſtood ſtill upon it, that it might be lengthened out, for their enjoying communion with God: But in a ſpecial manner they would wiſh that the *Sun of righteouſneſs* ſtood ſtill this day and ſhined, that, with Joſhua, they might get a more full revenge on their enemies; viz. their luſts, theſe curſed Canaanites that remain ſtill in the land.

III. You ought to go from this table in the Eunuch's frame, who, after his ſealing a covenant with God, went on his way rejoicing, Acts viii. 39. God's people are frequently in ſcripture called to *rejoice and be glad in the Lord*; and, to be ſure, there is not a more fit ſeaſon for it than now, when he hath been making ſuch a glorious diſcovery of that great love wherewith he loved them. A man that is condemned for a crime, and ready to be executed, O what joy hath he, when he receives his pardon! And ſhould not believers rejoice in God, who here *receive the atonement*, and are, as it were, brought again from the gibbet by the mercy of God in Chriſt?

There are two things you ought to rejoice in; 1. In God. 2. In his ways.

As to the *firſt*, it is the duty of a covenanted people to rejoice in their covenanted God. With what joy doth Zaccheus entertain Chriſt, when he cloſed a bargain with him?

him? Luke xix. 6.; and likewiſe the jailor, Acts xvi. 34. And to be ſure, whenever the babe of the new man is formed in the ſoul, it will leap for joy. It is moſt reaſonable that Chriſt ſhould have a joyful welcome into the ſoul. God not only commands and preſſes this joy, as in Pſal. v. 11. Joel ii. 23. Phil. iii. 1. and iv 4. but he affords the greateſt grounds for it. God the Father gives himſelf to us as a portion; his Son to be our Saviour; his well ordered covenant as a never-failing ſpring of conſolation; his holy Spirit to be our comforter; his influences to blow up this holy flame of joy; his graces of faith, hope, and love, to breed and feed it; his ordinances to maintain and increaſe it; and particularly the Lord's ſupper is a ſpiritual feaſt inſtituted for cheering the ſoul: For, after it, we ſee that Chriſt and his diſciples ſung a hymn.

What ground of joy have believers in their covenanted Redeemer, in his love, in his victories, and in his purchaſe? What ground of joy in his perſon and natures? In God incarnate they may ſee heaven and earth conjoined, God and human nature eternally married together, and themſelves very nearly related to God. O believer, he is "bone of your bone, and fleſh of your fleſh, and has a fellow-feeling of your infirmities;" and is not this matter of joy?

What ground of joy have you in the attributes of God, which are all engaged for you, and become yours by covenant? The thoughts of God may be ſweet to you as to the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. civ. 34. The thoughts of God are a terror to the wicked, but every one of his attributes may be a cordial to you, yea, even the moſt terrible of them: His juſtice, that before ſtood with a flaming ſword to keep you out of paradiſe, doth now turn an advocate to plead for your happineſs, 1 John i. 9. Juſtice is come over to your ſide, and pleads for your pardon and diſcharge, ſince Chriſt your ſurety hath paid the debt; and for the crown of glory to you, ſince he hath laid down the price.

His goodneſs and mercy afford you great matter of joy: Why? for, as he is good, ſo he doth good, and will let his people want nothing that is good for them; He will hear their cry, pity them in danger, and be a

ſtrong hold to them in the day of trouble. And, when you meet with mercies and comforts, you may receive them as tokens of his ſpecial love: They come to you wrapt up in the bowels of Chriſt, and dipt in his blood, and ſo are doubly ſweet. When you get a deliverance from any diſtreſs, you may ſay as Hezekiah, Iſa. xxxviii. 17. "Thou haſt, in love to my ſoul, delivered it from the pit of corruption." O believer, all thy mercies are covenanted to thee, which may make them ſweet to thy taſte: That word in Eccl. ix. 7. belongs to thee, "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works." Every morſel of bread thou eateſt comes from thy Father's hand, ſweetened in the blood of Chriſt, and is an earneſt of greater and better things laid up for thee.

God's wiſdom and faithfulneſs may rejoice thy heart. He is a ſkilful phyſician, he ponders our caſe, weighs our neceſſity, and knows how to preſcribe ſometimes bitter potions, and ſometimes cheering cordials: He knows how to time our bleſſings and our croſſes alſo. O covenanted ſoul, it may be ſweet to thee to think that all thy afflictions, as well as mercies, are the fruits of infinite wiſdom and faithfulneſs: Yea thy being within the covenant, alters the nature and property of thy croſſes, and makes them become good and medicinal to thee; thou art now to look on them as mercies covenanted and promiſed to thee. "When his children tranſgreſs, he will viſit them with the rod.—In faithfulneſs haſt thou afflicted me, ſaith the Pſalmiſt." O what comfort may this bring thee, when thou conſidereſt that all thy afflictions are an article of the covenant, the effect of God's love, and a fruit of Chriſt's purchaſe; ſo that you may ſay of every rod you meet with, The Lord ſees I want this, otherwiſe I ſhould not be exerciſed with it: My covenanted God and Father knows that this, and no leſs than this, is needful for me: What am I, that he ſhould be ſo mindful of me?"

You may rejoice in the almightineſs of God. He hath an arm that is full of power, that can eaſily level your ſpiritual Goliahs, pull down ſatan's ſtrong holds, and make good all his promiſes.

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You may rejoice in his immutability. He is unchangeable in his love and in his covenant. Mutable creatures change their reſpects, and break their leagues and covenants: But God's covenant is indiſſolvable; for he is engaged for our part, as well as his own, Jer. xxxii. 40. "O believer, God hath promiſed both for himſelf and thee:" As you may further ſee in Heb. xiii. 5. compared with Jer. xxx. 9. and 2 Tim. i. 12. If once in the covenant, thou art always in it; you may ſing that ſweet ſong, Pſal. xlviii. 14. "For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death;" yea, likewiſe in death, and over death. That which diſſolves the marriage-covenant among men, will not diſſolve this: Adultery will not do it; for God ſaith, "Though ye have played the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me.—Turn, ye backſliding children, for I am married unto you." Death cannot diſſolve it; yea, it brings you nearer to your covenanted God, where you ſhall ever rejoice in his preſence. Though death robs worldly men of their poor happineſs, and hungry heaven, yet it doth no harm to you: Nay, when you find death begin to aſſault your tabernacle of clay, you may "lift up your head with joy; for, behold, the day of your redemption draweth nigh." You may ſing with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxiii. 26. "My fleſh and heart faileth; but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever." What though my eye and my heart-ſtrings be ready to break, and the lamp of my life be like a candle burnt to the ſocket, and near the going out; yet ſtill God is my God and portion for ever.

Thus Olevian, a dying ſaint, comforted himſelf: "My hearing is gone, my ſmelling is gone, and my ſight is going; My ſpeech and feeling are almoſt gone; but the loving-kindneſs of God ſhall never depart from me." When the worldling's portion is gone, yours remains ſure to you: Loſe what you will, you cannot loſe that. Good cauſe had Habakkuk to ſay, Hab. iii. 17. 18. "Altho' the fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the vines, &c. yet I will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my ſalvation. O believer, the more you view your portion, you will find the more ground for

your

your rejoicing therein: For in God you have all things you need; all things you can deſire; yea, more than "eye hath ſeen, ear heard, or heart can conceive."

But, *ſecondly*, as you ought to go from this ordinance rejoicing in God, ſo likewiſe in the ways of God; and, like Jehoſhaphat, you ought to have your hearts lift up in the ways of the Lord. Put on holy reſolutions, to proceed with zeal, delight, and alacrity, in the ways of God's commandments: Your hearts ſhould now be enlarged to run and ſing in his ways, and go about every duty with pleaſure. Stedfaſtly reſiſt every ſin, and eſpecially the ſin that hath moſt eaſily beſet you, your predominant ſin, your beloved idol: Abhor both inward and outward ſins; flee drunkenneſs, uncleanneſs, ſwearing, lying, cheating, ſabbath-breaking, &c. Make religion your main work, and make conſcience of heart-holineſs: ſtudy to live near Chriſt, make uſe of him, and conſtantly depend on him, for righteouſneſs and ſtrength. Study to perform the duties both of the firſt and ſecond table: Carefully obſerve family-duties, and ſecret prayer. In a word, go on cheerfully in the ways of piety and devotion, and eſpecially in thoſe duties wherein communion and correſpondence with God is to be obtained and kept up. Go on joyfully in the ways of juſtice and honeſty, meekneſs and peace, temperance and ſobriety, charity and beneficence, humility and ſelf-denial; and truſt in your covenanted God, for covenant ſtrength and furniture for every good word and work.

IV. In going from the Lord's table, you ought to mix your joy and praiſes with a holy fear and trembling: And you have great cauſe for this, when you conſider 1. Your manifold ſhort-comings in this ſolemn approach to God. Surely your ſouls were not cleanſed according to the purification of the ſanctuary, your preparation was defective in the ſight of God. Have you not cauſe to be aſhamed, that your hearts were not more deeply affected with the great ſights preſented to your view, and the glorious things put in your offer? Have you not ground to be humbled for the coldneſs of your hearts, the waverings of your minds, the deadneſs of your ſpirits,

rits, and carnality of your affections, when you was about this heavenly and ſpiritual work? Alas for the weakneſs of our graces, the inconſtancy of our frames, and the manifold infirmities which cleave to our beſt performances! Had we no more ſin to anſwer for, but the iniquities of our holy things, they would be too heavy for us to bear. Let us be humbled under the ſenſe of them, and look to our great high-prieſt to make atonement for them.

2. You have cauſe to be humbled and fear, conſidering the manfold dangers you are expoſed to, and enemies you are environed with, who are never more buſy than after a ſacrament, and our being admitted to nearneſs with God. Chriſt, immediately after his baptiſm, and the ſolemn manifeſtation he had from heaven, was led away to be tempted of the devil, Matth. iv. 1. And it was after the Lord's ſupper that Chriſt told his diſciples, that "ſatan deſired to have them, that he might ſift them as wheat," Luke 22. 31. It was after Paul was rapt up to the third heaven, that he was in hazard of being exalted above meaſure, or puſt up with pride, and therefore had a meſſenger of ſatan ſent to buffet of him, 2 Cor. xii. Have you got any thing of the riches Chriſt, and the treaſures of heaven, at this ordinance? Then look well to yourſelves that you loſe it not, for the devil is going about ſeeking to rob you thereof: Therefore be not lifted up or ſecure, but be humble and watchful, and walk circumſpectly.

Sect. II. Containing Directions how to Behave when you go home to your Cloſets and Retiring Places.

THINK not your work over on a communion-ſabbath, when you are come home from the church: But as ſoon as poſſible retire.

I. For *prayer*. You ſhould be more bent upon prayer now than ever. The Pſalmiſt, when God had dealt kindly with him, reſolves therefore that he will call upon God as long as he lived, Pſal. cxvi. 2. This is a ſtrange return he would give God for former favours: He would go and beg new favours from him, and lie the

more closely about his hand; "I will love God, and love prayer the better all my days. This is not the manner of men, but God is delighted with such a return."

Quest. "But what shall we pray for now? Can God give more than what he hath given us in the sacrament?"

Ans. Though God hath here given you the seal of the covenant, and a right to all its privileges and promises; yet he will be enquired of by you for the particular application and accomplishment of them: You must put God to his word, and pray with the Psalmist, Psal. cxix. 49. "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. Be it to thy servant according to thy word." Again, you should pray that God may continue and preserve any good frame or tenderness of heart, spiritual motions and resolutions, or any warmness of affections and desires that have been wrought in you by this ordinance; for our hearts are ready to cool, and our goodness to vanish "like the morning clouds and the early dew:" You have need therefore to pray with David, 1 Chron. xxix. 18. "Lord, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of my heart:" And, Psal. lxviii. 28. "Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us." Your hearts are naturally deceitful, and your feet bent to backsliding; pray as in Psal. xvii. 5. "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." You have no strength in yourselves to keep the promises, and perform the vows to the Lord which you have made: Therefore beg from your covenanted God, that he may furnish you for every good word and work; for "it is he that worketh in you both to will and to do."

II. Self-examination is a duty most necessary on the back of this solemn ordinance, as well as before it. Review your carriage at it, so that you may be humbled for defects, or thankful for attainments; cast up your accounts, and see what you have gained at this gospel-market. Will you not be as wise for your souls, as you are for your bodies? Were you at a market trading for the things of this world, you would take this course after you had come from it: But, O "what will it profit you,

you, though you ſhould gain the whole world, if you ſhould loſe your ſouls?"

There are two things you ſhould carefully ſearch into, when you come home from the Lord's table: 1. If you had ſincerity in covenanting with God. 2. If you had his gracious preſence with you in this ordinance.

Queſt. 1. "How ſhall I know if I have ſincerely tranſacted with God at his table, and if he hath taken me into the bond of his covenant?"

Anſ. 1. It is of great conſequence for you to know this; for it is not every one that externally receiveth the ſeal of God's covenant, that is really taken into the bond of it: Many thouſands deceive themſelves in this matter. You may diſcover your ſincerity in covenanting, by reviewing the frame and condition your ſouls were in when you were about it, and by conſidering the frame and diſpoſition they are in now.

I. "What was the frame of your ſouls when you were tranſacting with God?"

1. Were you low and vile in your own eyes, and deeply humbled under a ſenſe of your own unworthineſs and ill-deſerving; ſo that you were made to ſay with the Centurion, from the bottom of your heart, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof; I have lived all my days in rebellion againſt thee; the bottomleſs pit is my due?" Then this is a good ſign of thy being brought within the covenant, according to Ezek. xvi. 62. 63.

2. Were you weary of the burden of ſin? Did you groan under it as a *heavy load?* Were you ſenſible that it was *too heavy for you to bear?* as the Pſalmiſt was, Pſal. xxxviii. 3. Then it is a good ſign; for it is to ſuch that Chriſt affords reſt in his covenant.

3. Did your ſouls long and pant for Chriſt, as the hunted *hart* for the *water-brooks*, the *ſcorched ground* for a *refreſhing ſhower*, or a *condemned man* for a *remiſſion?* Was it your cry, *None but Chriſt, give me Chriſt, or elſe I die:* Lord Jeſus, here a poor beggar for thy bounty, a diſeaſed Lazarus for thy cure, an empty belly for thee to fill, a naked back for thee to cover: *Never was there a ſoul that ſtood more in need of thee than I.*

Then this is a good token: For, wherever there is true faith, it empties the ſoul, diſcovers want and miſery in ourſelves, and great fulneſs in Chriſt. Faith comes with an *empty veſſel* to Chriſt's *open fountain*, it comes with an *open mouth* to his *full feaſt*, and with an *empty hand* to his *rich treaſure*.

4. Were you in a *reſigning frame* when you took the *ſeal* of the *covenant* into your hand? For *faith*, as it embraces and lays hold on Chriſt, ſo it delivers up the ſoul to Chriſt; and, as it takes Chriſt wholly, ſo it gives up the ſoul wholly to him. Did you give all you are, and all you have, your children, relations, honours, eſtates, intereſts, time, talents, health, ſtrength, and all to Chriſt, to be diſpoſed of, and employed by him, according to his pleaſure? Then this is a good mark of thy ſincerity.

5. Were you in a renouncing frame, willing to part with every luſt, and put a bill of divorce in the hands of every Delilah or beloved idol? Then it is a good ſign; for every ſincere ſoul will ſay, at ſuch a time, Ephraim, "What have I to do any more with idols?"

II. Conſider the frame and diſpoſition of your ſouls ſince you came from the Lord's table; for you may find out your ſincerity hereby.

1. Aſk your ſouls that queſtion, which Chriſt himſelf once aſked the Phariſees, Matth xxii. 42. "What think ye of Chriſt? Covenanted ſouls, to be ſure, will have a very high opinion of him; for "to all that believe he is precious. Can you ſay, then, that you have high and admiring thoughts of Chriſt, and that you wonder at his beauty: Once I was at peace without Chriſt, but now I ſee nothing but fire and wrath out of him: Once I ſaw little beauty in him, and ſaid, as the daughters of Jeruſalem ſaid to his ſpouſe, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" But now I ſee him *altogether lovely*: Yea, I ſee not only a matchleſs beauty in his perſon, but alſo in his way, his word, his ordinances, his people; nay, in his very croſs, and every thing that belongs to him.

2. All covenanted ſouls will be mightily pleaſed with the contrivance, frame and deſign of the covenant; they will

will ſay, "It is well ordered in all things:" they will be ſatisfied with all the articles of it, and with all the offices and relations of Chriſt; they will be content to be governed by his laws, as well as to be juſtified by his righteouſneſs. All they who have entered into a marriage-covenant with Chriſt will look to his perſon more than to his patrimony, and they will embrace his precepts as well as his promiſes. Try, therefore, if it be ſo with you. Are you pleaſed with the deſign of the covenant, viz. to exalt free grace? Would you have Chriſt all and yourſelves nothing? Would you be content with heaven, though it were for no more than to ſtand an eternal monument of free grace, and that you might, with others, join in your note to glorify and exalt it? Do you love ſtill to cry, "Not unto us, not unto us, but to Chriſt be the glory? Then this is a good ſign you are within the bond of this covenant.

3. Have you heart-melting thoughts at the remembrance of Chriſt's wounds? Are you ſenſibly touched for your ſins that pierced him, reſolved, through his grace, to pierce him no more, and that you will never give any harbour to thoſe traitors that put to death the Son of God? Then it is a ſign you have eyed him by faith at his table, and taken hold of his covenant.

4. If you be his covenanted friends, you will reſolve to obey every commanded duty, John xv. 14 Ye will be a people zealous of good works. And remember this, ye will reſolve to perform covenant-duties in a covenant-way, in a goſpel-method; *i. e* ye will do all out of love and gratitude to your benefactor and Redeemer; ye will do all to glorify him; ye will go out of yourſelves even to Chriſt for ſtrength, and depend on him for all.

Queſt. 2. How ſhall I know if I have met with Chriſt at his table, and enjoyed any thing of his gracious preſence there?

Anſ Chriſt hath many ways of viſiting his people, and holding communion with them; and, though he hath not done it in the way you were expecting, do not conclude that he hath not done it at all.

1. He ſome times draws near his people in this ordinance, by bringing light to their underſtandings, and making

making gracious diſcoveries to their ſouls.——Sometimes he diſcovers to us his greatneſs and purity, to make us humble us to the duſt, and make us ſeem nothing in our own eyes, and confeſs we are the vileſt of ſinners, and wonder that we are out of the pit: So was it with thoſe holy men, Job xl. 4. Iſa. vi. 3.——Sometimes he diſcovers his goodneſs and mercy, in giving his Son to die for ſuch wretches, and offering pardon to ſuch rebels: and thereby he ſheds abroad his love into our hearts, and melts them in tears, confeſſions, and thankful reſentments of his love, as in Luke vi. 44. 1 Tim. i. 16. —Sometimes he diſcovers Chriſt to be altogether lovely, ſin to be altogether vile, the world to be altogether vain, holineſs to be altogether neceſſary, and heaven to be altogether glorious.

2. He kindly viſits his people, when he draws out their graces to a lively exerciſe, and particularly ſends his quickning Spirit to melt their hearts into the exerciſe of repentance and mourning for ſin, or to actuate their faith, and enable them to lean on Chriſt for pardon and ſalvation, and ſay with that poor man, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief:"—Or when he kindles love in the heart, and makes it burn while he talks to them, and opens the ſcriptures, as he did to the two diſciples going to Emmaus; or help you to ſay with Peter, "Lord, thou that knoweſt all things, knoweſt that I love thee:"—Or when he draws out the deſires, longings, and pantings of the ſoul after himſelf, and makes us thirſt after him, and follow hard after him. Hence we ſee what a miſtake many are in, who think there is no communion with Chriſt but by ſenſible conſolations and manifeſtations of his love: For, where there is a holy ſhame, grief, and ſorrow wrought in the ſoul for ſin, it is as real an evidence of his gracious preſence, as when the ſoul is affectionately melted into love, praiſe, and joy. Tho' Chriſt come not to you by the higher way, yet be thankful if he come in the lower way.

3. Chriſt holds communion with his people in this ordinance, by ſtrengthening them for duty, and making them delight in his ſervice, and count it their meat and drink

drink to do his will, and reckon "one day in his courts worth a thouſand elſewhere."

4. When he intimates his ſpecial love and favour to their ſouls, which he doth many ways, by diſſolving their doubts and fears, ſcattering their clouds, ſhining on their graces, and clearing up their evidences; or whiſpering by his Spirit into their conſciences, "Fear not, I am your ſalvation: Be of good cheer, all your ſins are forgiven you: The Lord hath put away thy ſins, thou ſhalt not die." It is this way the Lord ſometimes brings his people into the *banqueting houſe*, ſatisfies them *as with marrow and fatneſs*, makes them to hear the *voice of joy and gladneſs*, fills them with *peace that paſſes underſtanding*, with *joy* that is *unſpeakable and full of glory*. It is thus that he kiſſes them *with the kiſſes of his mouth*, *i. e.* applies the comforts of his promiſes, which are the ſweet words of his mouth, yea, *ſweeter* to them *than honey or the honey-comb*: It is here he makes them to *drink of the rivers of his pleaſures*, brings them to his *holy mountain*; and makes them *joyful in his houſe of prayer*: It is here he "brings them out of the miry clay, ſets their feet upon a rock, eſtabliſhes their goings, and puts a new ſong in their mouth, even praiſes to our God."

It might be proper in this place to ſpeak to the caſes of ſeveral ſorts of communicants: But, having done this pretty fully in my *Sacramental Catechiſm*, I ſhall here ſpeak only to two ſorts.

I. Thoſe who, after ſecret ſelf-examination, and reviewing of their communicating, are put to complain that they do not find any comfort or ſpiritual advantage by the ſolemn ordinance of which they have been partaking.

II. Thoſe who cannot but acknowledge, to the praiſe of free grace, that they have been kindly dealt with, and privileged with ſpecial manifeſtations of God's love and favour at this holy ordinance.

Firſt, As to the firſt ſort of communicants.

There are ſometimes found not a few of God's people who, on the back of their communicating, are in a diſconſolate condition, "O (ſaith one) I have been examining myſelf

world since I came from the Lord's table, and reviewing my communicating; and I fear I have not met with Christ there, nor got any comfort or spiritual advantage by the ordinance. I think God is angry with me; and what shall I do?"

Ans. 1st. Granting it be so that thou hast got no benefit by this ordinance, beware of laying the blame in the least upon the master of the feast, who is a bountiful Lord, and delighteth in mercy; but leave your complaints entirely upon yourself, and search for the cause of your disappointment in yourself. And it is likely, upon due search, you will find, that either you have been slight in your preparations for the duty: your appetite hath not been sharpened with a sense of spiritual wants; you have not been watchful over your heart, either before, in time of, or after your communicating; or perhaps you have gone about this work too much in your own strength, without looking to God for strength and quickening in the gospel method. Jacob told his wives, Gen. xxxi. "I see your father's countenance, it is not toward me as before." Now, what was the reason of it? "Jacob (say Laban's sons) "hath taken away all that was our father's," he hath enhanced his riches. Well, hast thou dealt thus with thy heavenly Father? Hast thou robbed him of his glory in any measure by thy self-confidence? Then it is no wonder that his countenance was not so pleasant toward thee as at other times. Be humbled then for your defects and short-comings: And say, "Lord, thou art righteous, but I am wicked."

2dly, God may hide his face from his people at the sacrament, either for their trial, or for their spiritual improvement and advantage. He may hereby try you how you will behave under such a dispensation; if you will love him and cleave to him, even when he hides himself, or frowns upon you. Do not despond, O believer, though God appear to frown, or to speak bitter things against you; but cleave still to him by faith, and bless his name that he is at all in speaking terms with you, and not wholly silent to you, as he is to many, upon whom he will not bestow a reproof, but gives them

them up to walk after the counſels of their own hearts. It is a great mercy to have God rebuking us for our good.

But the Lord may be hiding himſelf, to raiſe in you the greater earneſtneſs and fervency in ſeeking after him. Thus he dealt with the ſpouſe, Cant. iii. 3. She was too lazy and careleſs in her inquiries for him, therefore he retires; and thereupon ſhe roſe from her ſloth, and went through all the ſtreets of the city in queſt of him, ſaying, "Saw ye him whom my ſoul loveth? Tell him that I am ſick of love." It were happy if your diſappointment had the ſame effect on you, to make you riſe and ſeek him more earneſtly, and go further than you did before. The ſpouſe went a little further, ſhe went further than the watchmen, before ſhe found him whom her ſoul loved; and ſo muſt you. You muſt go further than miniſters, ordinances, or ſacraments; go and look beyond all to Chriſt himſelf. Go alſo further in reſpect of diligence, ſincerity, ſpirituality, and heart-holineſs. Do as blind Bartimeus did, when he thought Chriſt was like to paſs by him without noticing him, Luke xviii. 39. "He cried ſo much the more, q. d. Lord, paſs not by me, allow me one word from thy bleſſed mouth, one crumb from thy gracious hand. O believer, do not limit God to the preciſe time of communicating, your feaſt may be yet to come; for the banqueting-houſe is not yet ſhut, though the communion-table be uncovered: Therefore, lye ſtill at the door, and cry ſo much the more, "Lord, others are ſerved, and not I: Haſt thou not one bleſſing for me, even for me, O my Father? Lord, I cannot depart without it; I muſt even die at thy threſhold." Thus pray in faith, and wait in hope, and God will come in due time. "It is good that thy ſoul ſhould both hope, and quietly wait for the ſalvation of the Lord."

3*dly*, God's people do ſometimes get gracious tokens of his bounty, and marks of his favour, when they are not well ſenſible of it; ſo that they have cauſe to ſay with Jacob at Bethel, Gen. xxviii. 16. "Surely God was in this place, and I knew it not." There may be real

real communion, when there is no ſenſible communion. The two diſciples going to Emmaus, their hearts did burn with love to Chriſt, and Chriſt converſed with them, when yet they knew it not. Or they may ſometimes reckon what they have got at the ſacrament to be nothing, becauſe they got not what they were expecting. They were perhaps expecting peace, comfort, or joy, which they have not found; and this makes them overlook any revivings and ſmokings of grace which now are begot in their hearts. Haſt thou, O communicant, got a crumb of grace, do not undervalue it, though it be ſmall, but be humble and thankful for it, for ſurely it is more than you deſerve. It is not good manners for a ſtranger, when invited to a great man's table, to carve for himſelf; therefore be content with God's carving for you, and bleſs him he hath not ſent you to the table of devils, and given you a portion with the damned.

Many are apt to think nothing is a feaſt, unleſs they get ſmiles from God, joy, peace, and ſenſible manifeſtations of his love: But there may be great bounty ſhown to us without theſe; particularly, if you have got any more ſenſe of ſin's evil, or concern for the hardneſs of your hearts: If you have got any higher eſteem of Chriſt, and of the contrivance of ſalvation through his mediation; if you have any more hunger and thirſt after Chriſt, any more love to holineſs and the ways of Chriſt, any more deſire after his preſence in duties and ordinances, any more ſenſe of your need of the fountain of his blood: Then all theſe are gracious tokens of his bounty to your ſouls, for which you have cauſe to bleſs and magnify the Lord. We may enjoy the ſaving influences of the Spirit, when we do not feel his more abundant conſolations. God may graciouſly accept of us, hold communion with us, and ſeal our pardon to us, though he do not teſtify it by giving in extraordinary joys. The trueſt communion with God is to enjoy communion with him in his graces, whereby our ſouls are made conformable unto God, and are ſtamped with his image. Well, if you have got any more grace, be thankful to God, though you have got no more comfort. Though you do not ſpring upward in joy, bleſs God

God if you root yourſelves more downward in humility. Though you do not enjoy much of God in the ordinances here, yet be thankful if you get your deſires more enlarged after the full enjoyment of God above. The kindneſs of God muſt not be overlooked, nor the day of ſmall things deſpiſed; but the leaſt crumb of grace is to be noticed and received with thankfulneſs, and this is the way to get more.

We are not to judge of our profiting in duty, and of our gaining by ordinances, by our preſent feeling and receiving of ſenſible comforts: For the ſouls of God's people may be in a thriving ſtate of grace, even when they are much caſt down and ſharply exerciſed. Let us then ſeriouſly reflect upon our communicating, and ſee if we can ſay that our hearts were ſingle and ſincere in the performance of the duty, and in our covenanting with God, and if we continue ſtedfaſt with God therein; this may adminiſter ground of comfort to us, upon our after-reflection, though our ſouls were not lifted up with joy and comfort in the time of performance. God looks not ſo much to peoples ſudden fits of paſſion, or flaſhes of affection, as he doth to the bent and tendency of a ſincere ſoul

Let none then go from this ordinance with any harſh thoughts of Chriſt, or at all to give credit to theſe evil reports that Satan and our wicked hearts would bring up upon his good ways: But let us ſtill love and praiſe him, and ſpeak to the commendation of his grace and bounty whatever way he take in dealing with us. Though we ſhould get no more from him, ſurely it is great matter of praiſe, if he continue to ſtrive with us by his Spirit, when he lets others fall dead aſleep; if he keep us waking and reſtleſs without him, when he ſuffers others to ly ſtill in careleſs ſecurity; if he keep us ſtill hoping and waiting in the way of duty, when others are ſunk into the gulf of deſpair. Whoever they be that ſincerely "truſt in God's mercy, their hearts ſhall at laſt rejoice in his ſalvation," Pſal xiii. 5.

Secondly, As to the ſecond ſort of communicants before mentioned, namely, thoſe of God's people, who cannot but acknowledge, to the praiſe of free grace, that

they have been kindly dealt with at his table: they have been privileged with ſpecial manifeſtations of God's love and favour at this holy ordinance.

Well then, O believers, hath the Lord diſtinguiſhed you from others at this occaſion? Hath he taken you into his banqueting houſe, and dealt bountifully with your ſouls? Hath he feaſted you with the goodneſs of his houſe, and allowed you his gracious preſence, and the ſpecial intimations of his love? Then, to be ſure, you are under the higheſt obligations of love and gratitude to him: God looks for more at your hands than others, be careful to give him ſuitable returns, and improve what you have got to his glory. And, for that end, I ſhall give you the following advices.

I. Delight and ſolace yourſelves in his preſence; ſay, as in Pſal. cxvi. "Return to thy reſt, O my ſoul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee:" Make Chriſt's love and favour the beloved centre of your ſoul. How much did Peter ſolace himſelf in that manifeſtation of Chriſt's love and glory he had on the mount of transfiguration? "It is good for us (ſaid he) to be here, let us build three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moſes, and one for Elias." Not a word of building one for himſelf: He was ſo ſatisfied and delighted with the glory he ſaw in Chriſt, that he was content to ly without doors to behold it: Neither cold nor rain could make him faint or weary.

II. Is Chriſt come into your ſoul? Take care to entertain him ſuitably, and attend him duly; wander not from his preſence, but keep cloſs by him, and follow hard after him, that you may be able to ſay with the Pſalmiſt, "I am continually with thee; I will ly down with thoughts of him at night, and when I awake I'll be ſtill with him." Beware of any thing that may be uneaſy to him; it is a pity that ſuch a bleſſed gueſt ſhould meet with any diſturbance, or be ſmoked out of the houſe by ſin: O then lay a ſtrict charge on all your luſts, corruptions and worldly thoughts, to depart, that they "ſtir not up nor awake your beloved, till he pleaſe," according to Cant. ii. 7.

III.

III Earneſtly intreat him to ſtay with you: Say, "Lord, be not as a wayfaring man, that turns aſide to lodge for a night, or a ſhort time: But be thou my conſtant gueſt." And, when he mints to go away, ſtrive to detain and hold him by prayer, as Abraham did Chriſt, Gen. xviii. 3. "My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy ſight, paſs not away from thy ſervant:" And with the two diſciples going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 29. ſay, "Lord, abide with us; for it is towards evening, the day is far ſpent: And it is ſaid, they conſtrained him, and he went to tarry with them." In like manner, plead with Chriſt, Lord it is towards night, and I know not what a black cloud is coming on me or the church: I need thy ſtrengthening preſence before hand: Lord, ſtay with me a while; I know not how far I may go and what ſtorms I may meet with, before I get another ſuch meal.

IV. Set conſcience to the watch-tower of thy ſoul, charge it to keep its poſt, and ſtrictly examine all that go out, and all that come in, what thoughts go out from the heart, and what temptations are ſeeking to come in: And when luſts come knocking at the gate, ſeeking entrance into the heart, anſwer them according to that word, Ezek xliv. 2. 3. "It is for the prince: the Lord God hath entered in by it, therefore it ſhall be ſhut;" it ſhall be patent to none but Chriſt. O it is ſad when conſcience falls aſleep, ſuffers an enemy to come up to the gates, and enter into the city, without giving warning. Charge conſcience then to watch, and give timeous warning againſt every luſt and temptation, againſt every declining of affections or backſliding of heart, and againſt every wrong or untender ſtep that may blot your evidences or darken your ſky; for though a believer cannot loſe his ſalvation, yet he may loſe the joy of his ſalvation, Pſal. li. and be left to grope in the dark in a moſt uncomfortable ſtate, without ſun or ſtars appearing to him for many days.

V. Delight to think on Chriſt. "Let your meditation of him be ſweet; remember him on your bed; and meditate on him in the night-watches; let him ly as a bundle of myrrh all night betwixt your breaſts, i. e. in your heart." Carry him up and down in your thoughts

all the day: Mind what a view you got of Chriſt at his own table, think on what he has done and ſuffered; what a ſea of wrath, what a ſea of blood, a ſea of tears, a ſea of ſufferings and ſorrows, he did wade through, to bring redemption and pardon to you. If we rightly conſidered what coſt and pains Chriſt hath been at for us, we might wonder how he ſhould be one whole hour together out of his peoples minds: Oh what a ſhame is it to forget him! We ſee a worldly man doth not forget to think of his money, lands, buildings, and plantings, for a whole day or week to an end: but, alas! we weary to think on precious Chriſt and heaven for an hour or two: O let us lament this plague, and beſeech our bleſt phyſician to cure it.

VI. The more you ſee of Chriſt and his beauty, be ſtill deſirous of further diſcoveries of it: If you have ſhared of this holy feaſt, you will find it both ſatisfies and begets an appetite. No doubt Moſes was raviſhed with divine contemplations through the forty days he converſed with God in the mount; yet, after he comes down from it, he ſtill longs for more, and cries, Exod. xxxiii 18. "I beſeech thee, ſhew me thy glory." In like manner, thirſt and pray for further diſcoveries of the king in his beauty.

VII. Take pleaſure in commending Chriſt to others, and ſhewing what a lovely Saviour and choice maſter he is; invite them to come taſte and ſee that God is good. Let his name be ſweet and ſavoury to you, delight in mentioning it. How ſweet was his name to Paul? For in 1 Cor. i. and the firſt thirteen verſes of that chapter, he mentions his name no leſs than twelve times: He could never get enough of that ſweet name Jeſus, that rings with ſalvation; he ſome times there mentions it twice in one verſe.

VIII. Remember that Satan envies you, and eyes you as a pirate doth a richly loaden ſhip, and will do what he can either to rob you of your treaſure, or give you a troubleſome voyage: You may expect trials on the back of this feaſt, and it may be from hands that ye would little expect; but reſolve, whatever temptations come, or winds do blow, that you will cleave to your Maſter,

Maſter, and never weary of his work and ſervice: Say to him, as the Hebrew ſervant to his maſter, Deut. xv. 16. "I will not go away from thee, becauſe I love thee and thine houſe, and becauſe I am well with thee." I am ſure, O believer, thou haſt far better reaſon to ſay ſo than any elſe; there is no drudgery in Chriſt's ſervice, you have the beſt maſter, the beſt work, and the beſt wages: Have not you found him kind to you at this time? Will you ever forget it? You have at this time eaten plentifully of his bread? "O do not lift up the heel againſt him;" never betray him, nor give a wound to his intereſt any more.

IX. Be much concerned for his glory, and for the advancement of his kingdom. Pity thoſe who are ſtrangers to him, and pray for them; ſend portions to them for whom nothing is provided: Pity others who have not got your length, and put in a word for them; pray for a crumb to them from that full table at which you have been feeding ſo plentifully.

X. Hath Chriſt been dealing more kindly with you than others? Then he expects you will do more for him than others, Matth. v. 47. He hath done ſingular things for you; ſee that you do ſingular things for him: carry as becomes his peculiar people. Be not content with common mercies, or ſuch portions as baſtards may have: Be not content with common graces, gifts, and attainments, ſuch as hypocrites may have: Be not content with common converſation; live not as the men of the world, whoſe hearts are ſet on things below, but live above the world, have your feet where other mens heads are: Shew ſo much humility, mortification, patience, heavenlineſs, and charity in your walk, that the world may not only take notice that you have been with Jeſus, but that you deſign to lodge and live eternally with Jeſus. Live not according to common examples, but ſet Chriſt and his ſaints before you for patterns: And whatever others do about you, reſolve to ſtand for Chriſt, though it were alone; ſay, with Joſhua, "As for me and my houſe we will ſerve our covenanted God."

XI. Labour to keep ſtill up a lively and ſpiritual frame of ſoul, and beware of loſing what you have; be ſenſi-

ble

ble that you are not able to maintain it more than to beget it: You have many enemies ſeeking to rob you of it; walk with a holy ſuſpicion and jealouſy, as a traveller, having much money about him, ſuſpects every one he meets for a thief. Delight in Chriſtian fellowſhip; one live-coal helps both to kindle others, and to keep them burning, Heb x. 24. 25. "Let us conſider one another, to provoke to love and good works. Not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together, as the manner of ſome is, but exhorting one another."—Again, be tender and circumſpect in your walk; for a tender walk keeps up a tender frame. Beware of the cares of the world and earthly mindedneſs; for, if you thruſt a knife into the earth, it blunts its edge. Frequent ſacramental occaſions, and thoſe heart-warming ordinances which God appointed for your ſouls advantage. Call your hearts frequently to account; ſay, "O my ſoul, how is it with thee now? Time was, thou hadſt a good frame, good motions and deſires: What's become of you now? Such a chamber, ſuch a place in the field, ſuch a kirk or communion-table, can witneſs the meltings of thy heart and flowings of thine affections towards Chriſt and things above: Where are they now? But, above all, be much in ſecret prayer, and in the exerciſe of faith on Chriſt the fountain of life. Intruſt your hearts and frames to his keeping, who is your great Friend and Surety; ſay believingly, with the Pſalmiſt, "Lord be Surety for thy ſervant for good; Into thy hands, O Lord, I commit my ſpirit; for thou haſt redeemed me, O God of truth." Let thine everlaſting arms be underneath me, and hold up my goings. Plead for the conſtant ſupplies of his Spirit, that he, who is as the dew to Iſrael, may afford oil to your chariot-wheels, and wind to your empty ſails. You have need to watch and pray, for Satan is ſtill going about; this old crooked ſerpent can wind himſelf in at a very narrow hole; he hath many cold froſt winds to freeze up your affections, many deceitful charms to lull you aſleep; you may ſleep, but he never ſleeps. O communicant, watch; for if he find you aſleep, he will ſoon ſteal away the living child, and lay a dead one in its room: God ſave you from this dead ſleep.

XII. Have

XII. Have you tasted of God's goodness at this occasion? Sit not down satisfied in what you have got; but let it excite in you earnest longings for heaven, where the full feast is. These are but the foretastes and first-fruits of the promised land, sent to wean your hearts from the world, and sharpen your desires after the Canaan that is above, where these first-fruits do grow and are full ripe. A communion-sabbath is the likest thing we have in the world to that everlasting sabbath, that is above: But, how small are the comforts of this lower table, if compared with the higher table? What is a sacrament-feast here, to the marriage-supper of the lamb? What is drinking of the fruit of the vine here, to the drinking it new with Christ in his Father's kingdom, where the glorious heavens will be the room, and the heavenly host the attendants? Here we feed on Christ by symbols and sacraments, and have but bad appetites; but there they enjoy and see him as he is: Here are many traitors and unworthy communicants, that thrust themselves in among the children; but there no Judas, nor unfurnished guest, can come, nor any thing that can impair the glory of that feast. What is the singing of psalms here, to the music of angels there? Had you been with the shepherds, Luke ii. and seen the angels, and heard the multitude of the heavenly host praising God, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good-will towards men," you would never have forgot that glorious sight and sound; but O that is little to what you shall see and hear above.

The greatest manifestations of God here below are but a faint shadow of the beatific vision above. When Moses was talking a little with God in the mount, and saw his back parts from the clefts of the rock, it made his face so glorious, that the people could not behold it without a vail: But, O how will Moses's face and all about him shine now! It was little that he saw then, to what he sees now, and what we (if believers) will see ere long.

Peter was so transported on the mount with a sight of Christ's transfiguration, and Moses and Elias talking with him, that he was in an extasy of [illegible]

'Maſter, it is good for us to be here, let us build tabernacles. *q. d.* Let us dwell ſtill here, and not go down to yon vain empty world again; here's better company and purer delights." But, O how much more is Peter raviſhed with wonder now! This was but a ſmall part of that glory, which Peter and the ſaints above ſee there

O believers, you ought in a communion day to get up to the mount of meditation, as Moſes did to the mount Nebo, and view this promiſed land; and, as ye ſee it, you ought to long for it, and alſo "rejoice in hope of the glory of God," and ſay, "O ſhall I ere long join with that one hundred and forty-four thouſand that follow the Lamb? Shall I bear a part in that heavenly concert? Shall all tears be wipt from my eyes? Shall my poor dying body be turned into a glorious ſtar? Shall I be for ever with the Lord, and drink of the rivers of pleaſure that run clear as cryſtal alongſt the banks of eternity, and whoſe ſtreams make glad the city of God? And ſhall not my heart leap for joy at the proſpect of it? The night is far ſpent, and the day is at hand, the ſun is at the riſing; and, will not a believer rejoice in hope of it?"

The wiſe men, when they but ſaw the ſtar that pointed out where Chriſt was, yet it is ſaid, "They rejoiced with exceeding great joy" Matt. ii. 10 But, O believing communicant, thou wilt ſhortly ſee the ſtar of Jacob, namely, Chriſt himſelf, who is the "bright morning ſtar," ſhining in his glory; and will not that cauſe far more joy to thee? If the diſciples returned from the ſepulchre with great joy, when they but got the news that Chriſt was riſen from the dead; what joy will it be to thee, to ſee him raiſed and reigning in his glory, and thyſelf raiſed from the grave to reign eternally with him?

Well then, let a communion-day, and the comforts of it, put thee in mind of that happy ſtate, and raiſe ſuitable deſires and affections in thee towards it, and make thee long and ſay, "Lord, theſe joys are too great to enter into me now; O make me fit to enter into them!"

Laſtly,

Laſtly, As far as time and ſtrength can allow, the evening of a communion ſabbath ſhould be ſpent in ſecret and family duties. I acknowledge our frail bodies may be much fatigued by our long attendance, intenſeneſs and abſtinence this day: But O if we could ſay this evening (and particularly miniſters and elders, who had greater work this day upon their hands than others) that though we may be weary with our work, yet we are not weary of this work; for it is Chriſt's work, which is both pleaſant and profitable, and carries its own reward in its boſom!

And ſince your bodies muſt be refreſhed this night, and you muſt entertain ſome fellowſhip with others, there ought to be a more divine and heavenly air upon your converſations at this time than ordinary: Let your carriage and diſcourſe be ſuch as becomes thoſe who have been on the mount this day with God, that others may take notice of you, that you have been with Jeſus.

When you ſee the table covered this night, or ſupper ſet upon it, you may think or ſay, "Now I am come from a communion-table to a common-table; from taſting of the upper-ſprings, to ſhare of the nether-ſprings; from feeding on manna, to eat the bread that periſheth: How great is the change of my fare! Lord, let not this table be a ſnare to me, nor any wiſe tend to divert my mind either from the ſweet table I have been at, or that bleſt table above I would be at." We may likewiſe take occaſion to admire the infinite bounty and goodneſs of God to both our ſouls and bodies: O what pains and coſt he is at with us! At our common table we ſee his beaſts killed to maintain the life of our bodies, and at the communion-table we have ſeen his dear Son ſlain to preſerve the life of our ſouls.

In the *laſt* place, keep a watchful eye upon all your thoughts and words this night; look well to the frames of your ſouls. Hath God ſhed abroad his love this day in your hearts? keep yourſelves in the love of God. Ly down this night with ſweet thoughts of Chriſt, fervently praying for a rich bleſſing upon the day's work,

and for his gracious preſence on the morrow, that the laſt day of the feaſt may be the greateſt and ſweeteſt.

Sect. III. Containing directions to all Communicants in general, concerning their after converſation in the world.

REMEMBER you have been covenanting with God, and taking ſolemn vows on yourſelves at the Lord's table; ſee that your converſations be ſuitable hereunto. You have been admitted to great honours and ſpecial privileges: See then that ye ſhew your thankfulneſs to God the author of your mercies, by the love of your hearts, the praiſes of your lips, and exemplarineſs of your lives. But more particularly, obſerve theſe following directions.

Direct. I. Study to be true and faithful Soldiers to your General, whoſe colours you have ſolemnly ſworn to.

YOU have come under a ſacramental oath to God; ſee that you keep it ſacred and inviolable. The Pſalmiſt gives it as a mark of a man that will go to heaven, Pſal. xv. that he keeps his oaths and promiſes, even though it ſhould be to his hurt and prejudice. How much more, then, ſhould a man be careful to keep his oaths and engagements he comes under to God in the ſacrament, when it is greatly for his good and advantage ſo to do? O communicant, be faithful to the Captain of your ſalvation, abide by his ſtandard, deſert him not in the day of battle, go not over to his enemies camp. Remember what he hath done and ſuffered for you, and let the love of Chriſt conſtrain you to abide with him. Plutarch tells us of the ſoldiers of Pompey, that when he could not keep them in the camp by any perſuaſion, yet when Pompey threw himſelf on the ground, ſaying, if ye will go, ye ſhall trample on your general; it is ſaid,

ſaid, they were overcome and perſuaded to ſtay. So your general, Chriſt, when in the garden, threw himſelf on the ground, wreſtling in an agony, to ſave you from ſin, and ſtop your career to hell: O then do not trample on your general, but ſtop your ſelf deſtroying courſe, and abide with your Saviour. We read, 2 Sam. xx. 12. that David's ſoldiers while marching very faſt, when they ſaw the dead body of Amaſa lying in the way, (viz the general wallowing in blood) they ſtopt their march and ſtood ſtill. O communicant, though formerly thou haſt been marching furiouſly in the ways of ſin, yet when thou ſeeſt the mangled, wounded, pierced, and crucified body of thy Saviour before thee, thou ſhouldſt ſtop thy courſe, and proceed no further. Oh, do not trample on thy wounded general, do not deſpiſe his bleeding wounds, nor forget his dying love. Keep ſtedfaſtly your ſacramental oath, and never act contrary to it. Beware of plotting againſt him, or correſponding with traitors. Let it never be heard, that any of Chriſt's ſworn ſoldiers ſhall either deſert or betray their renowned general. If you would be faithful ſoldiers to Chriſt your general, then carefully obey his orders, courageouſly adhere to his intereſt, valiantly fight for his cauſe, and manfully reſiſt his enemies, and abide by his ſtandard to the very laſt. "Be thou faithful to the death, and thou ſhalt get the crown of life," Rev. ii. 10.

DIRECT. II. Study to be active and diligent in a courſe of new obedience, after the Sacrament.

YOU ſhould now walk circumſpectly, be more humble and pious towards God, more juſt and righteous towards man, and more ſober and temperate towards yourſelves. Have a ſincere reſpect to every commanded duty: Keep the ſabbath more exactly, hear more attentively, pray more fervently, meditate more frequently, and ſee to watch over your hearts, your words, and your ways, more diligently, that ſo you may pleaſe God, walk worthy of Chriſt, walk worthy of the covenant, of the ſacrament, of the kingdom, of the goſpel and grace of God. Let your preſent deportment be

anſwerable to your future preferment; and ſee that there be ſome proportion betwixt your privileges and your duties.

It ſhould be with a man after his communion with God in the ſacrament, as it was with Jacob after his communion with God in Bethel, Gen. xxix. 1. "Then Jacob lift up his feet, (as it is in the original) and came into the land of the people of the eaſt." After Jacob had met with God, then he lift up his feet, *i. e.* he went on his journey with ſtrength, with ſpirit and cheerfulneſs. So after we have had fellowſhip with God in the ſacrament, we ſhould, in the ſtrength of that meal, lift up our feet, and go on cheerfully and reſolutely in our journey towards heaven. Nay, we ſhould, like Jehoſhaphat, not only have our hands and feet, but alſo our "hearts lift up in the way of the Lord." We ſhould now run his errand moſt cheerfully, ſing in his ways, and ſerve him with alacrity. When God calls us to any duty, we ſhould preſently anſwer the firſt intimation of his will, "Speak, Lord, for thy ſervant heareth." O communicant, thou oughteſt now to be ſwift to hear every one of God's calls; be like the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. xxvii. 8. "When thou ſaidſt, Seek ye my face; my heart ſaid unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I ſeek." Though before I have neglected to ſeek thee in public with others, and in private by myſelf, and been, alas, very negligent in the duties of thy worſhip; yet now I will begin to read the ſcriptures, praiſe thy name, and pray diligently, not only in ſociety with others, but alſo by myſelf in ſecret, and do all theſe duties of holineſs mine oath at the ſacrament doth bind me unto. And ſee that you reſolve and perform all theſe, leaning to the ſtrength of your covenanted Redeemer.

DIRECT. III. Abandon all your former known ſins, and ſtrictly guard againſt them after the Sacrament.

REMEMBER what Paul ſaith, Eph. iv. 28. "Let him that ſtole, ſteal no more," &c. In like manner, ſay I, let him that profaned God's name, profane it no more;

more; let him that lyed, lye no more; let him that uſed to break the ſabbath, be drunk, cheat, be unclean, &c. do ſo no more. Hath Chriſt been waſhing you in the laver of his blood? O do not go back to wallow in the mire. Did he ſpeak peace to you at the table? O do not turn again to folly.

Let never that be charged upon communicants, that was laid to Iſrael's charge of old, Exod. xxxii. 6. "The people ſat down to eat and to drink, and roſe up to play. Oh, will any ſit down to eat and to drink at the Lord's table, and then riſe up to play the wanton, play the prodigal, play the apoſtate, and join with the enemies of God. Surely, O communicant, if thou ſhouldſt do ſo, thy ſins will not be of any ordinary dye; they will be very heinouſly aggravated, and far more grievous and piercing to Jeſus Chriſt than the ſins of many others. David was not much troubled at Shimei's railing, but Abſalom's rebellion pierced his very ſoul, 2 Sam. xvi. 11. "Behold, my ſon, which came forth of my bowels, ſeeking my life." So may Chriſt ſay, The ſins of the wicked are no ſurpriſing thing, but the ſins of communicants are very piercing: "He that did eat bread with me, hath lift up his heel againſt me," Pſal. xli. 9.

O believer, hath Chriſt delivered thee from ſin and Satan, hell and wrath; and wilt thou rebel againſt thy deliverer? Oh wilt thou thus requite the Lord for his marvellous loving-kindneſs! Mayſt thou not ſay with the Jews, after their return from the Babyloniſh captivity, Ezra ix. 13. 14. "After ſuch a deliverance as this, ſhould I again break thy commandments, wouldſt thou not be angry with me, till thou hadſt conſumed me?" If I ſhould again join with the wicked, and return to my old ſins, O what a dreadful place in hell might I look for?

DIRECT. IV. Keep a watchful eye and a ſtrong guard againſt the temptations of Satan, upon the back of a ſacrament.

SATAN is never more buſy nor more violent to tempt and draw men to ſin, than when they are new come

come from the Lord's table: Why? He is exceeding malicious, and helliſh in his enmity againſt ſouls; and he knows, if he can draw them into ſin upon the back of ſuch a near approach to God, it is the way to make their ſins out of meaſure ſinful before God, and exceedingly to widen the breach betwixt God and their ſouls. Look how Sennacherib dealt with Hezekiah after he had reformed the church, ſettled the worſhip of God, and put all in good order, 2 Chron. xxxi. 1. There it is ſaid, "After theſe things, and the eſtabliſhment thereof, Sennacherib king of Aſſyria came and entered into Judah, and encamped againſt the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himſelf." In like manner doth ſatan deal with communicants, after they have been at the ſacrament, and have renewed their covenant with God, and eſtabliſhed their reſolutions againſt the commiſſion of ſin, and for the performance of duty: After theſe things will the devil come with all his forces, and encamp againſt the fenced cities, (the communicants hearts) and ſeek to win them for himſelf. He hath an army of ſtratagems, wiles, devices, ſnares, and temptations always at command; and lays many ambuſhments againſt the communicant: Oh what need have we to be on our guard after ſuch a ſolemn ordinance, and to labour to foreſee and prevent ſatan's helliſh deſigns againſt us! It were happy if we could ſay with the apoſtle, "We are not ignorant of his devices."

O communicant, when ſatan comes to tempt thee to ſin after the ſacrament, ſay, What! wouldſt thou have me perjured before God? Shall I, who have been at God's table, and have ate and drunk with him, lift up my heel againſt him? Shall I take the members of Chriſt, and make them the members of an harlot? Shall I defile that body, wherein he hath choſen to reſide? Shall I force him out of his habitation by any impurity, or offend him by entertaining nauſeous thoughts, or the vile ſuggeſtions of that unclean ſpirit? Shall theſe hands, that have received the ſacred elements, work deceit? Shall theſe eyes, that have been filled with tears at the Lord's table, be filled with luſt or envy? Shall the mouth,

mouth, that hath drunk of the conſecrated wine, be full of rotten diſcourſe? Imitate Joſeph, when tempted, flee with haſte out of temptation's way, and ſay, "How ſhall I do this wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?" Or ſay, with the ſpouſe, "I have waſhed my feet, how ſhall I defile them?" I have waſhed my ſoul, how ſhall I pollute it with ſin? I have taken on with Chriſt, and how ſhall I turn my back on ſo good a Maſter? "Get thee behind me, ſatan."

DIRECT. V. Study that bleſſed art of improving and feeding on the ſacrament, and a crucified Jeſus repreſented therein, after you gone from it.

WE ſhould not only feed on Chriſt while at the ſacrament, but we ſhould continue to feed on Chriſt, the maſter of this feaſt, when the communion-table is removed. As the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs, they did not only drink of the rock when they were at it, but, after they were removed and gone from it, they ſtill continued to drink of it. But, how could that be? The apoſtle tells us, that the rock followed them, 1 Cor. x. 4. i, e. the water that iſſued out of the rock followed them as they journeyed, in all their ſtages and removes. So, when we are gone from the clefts of the rock that were ſtreaming to us in the ſacrament, we ſhould continue to make uſe of theſe ſtreams, and ſhare of the virtue and efficacy of this water of life, which follows us, and ſtreams after us, all the while we are travelling in the wilderneſs of this world, till we come home to the heavenly Canaan. And as the ſtreams of the rock not only followed, but alſo accompanied the Iſraelities, and run before them too; ſo we muſt have Chriſt with us, and depend on him in every ſtep of our journey, and likewiſe have our eye ſtill upon him as our guide and leader to heaven. O that we could learn the heavenly art of living by faith on the Son of God, by continued dependence on him, and making application to him for righteouſneſs and ſtrength; righteouſneſs for removing our guilt, and juſtifying our perſons before God; and ſtrength for performing du-

ties

ties, conquering luſts, and bearing croſſes! O that we could come with our daily ſins and pollutions to a crucified Jeſus, and make renewed and daily application of that blood we were bathing our ſouls with in the ſacrament! May we ſtill drink of the ſpiritual rock, and daily find the virtue, efficacy, and benefit of the ſacrament, following and ſtreaming after us while we are in the wilderneſs! May we conſtantly meditate on the love and death of our lovely Jeſus, carry the print of the nails in our hearts, and continually bear about with us the dying of the Lord Jeſus; that we may ſtill look to him, draw nouriſhment from him, and walk on in the ſtrength of the ſpiritual meal we have been receiving, till we come to perfection!

DIRECT. VI. Endeavour to keep up the lively and laſting impreſſion of the vows of God upon you.

CONSIDER ſeriouſly the engagements you have come under at the ſacrament: You have done like the people of Judah in Nehemiah's time, Neh. x. 29. who entered into a curſe and an oath to walk in God's law, and to obſerve and do all the commandments of the Lord. It is a ſolemn oath, and a fearful imprecation you come under at the Lord's table, to be faithful ſubjects and ſervants to Chriſt: You ſwear allegiance to the King of heaven, over the broken body and ſhed blood of the Lamb of God: You imprecate upon yourſelves, that a cup of wrath may be put in your hands, inſtead of the cup of the new Teſtament, if you deal falſly with God in his covenant, which you do here ſeal. Now, if you perjure yourſelves, conſider the hazard; you incur not only all the curſes of God's law, but the ſore vengeance of his goſpel alſo: You not only draw down upon you the wrath of a juſt God, but likewiſe the wrath of a merciful Mediator: And whom have you to interpoſe for you, if he be againſt you?

O communicant, if thou ſhouldſt, like Samſon, break all theſe bands aſunder, and venture to fetch that ſacrifice away from the altar, which thou hadſt tied to it with

with ſuch ſtrong cords of oaths, vows, and covenants; mayſt thou not expect to bring fire from the altar along with it, that will conſume thee?

There are ſome who remember their vows no longer than the ſacrament laſts: While they are at the Lord's table, they have perhaps ſome ſenſe of their obligations to ſerve God and leave ſin; but, when they riſe and depart from the table, the ſenſe of their engagements departs from them. I have read of the Abyſſines, that after the ſacrament they think it not lawful for them to ſpit that day till the ſetting of the ſun. This is ſuperſtition in them; but yet their ſuperſtition will riſe up in judgment againſt the profane carriage of many after the ſacrament. Would they not ſpit that day? What ſhall we think of thoſe who ſo ſoon forget their vows, that they do not ſtick to ſpit in Chriſt's face on that very day they eat his bread, by their looſe and ungodly practices afterwards?

There are others not quite ſo groſs, that will lay themſelves under ſome reſtrictions for a day or two after the ſacrament; but then, alas, they drop all their engagements, and return to their former ſinful liberties. Oh, doth the ſacramental covenant bind but for a day or two? Doth the efficacy of that ſolemn ordinance laſt no longer with you? Is not the bond thereof as ſtrong on thy conſcience the next month, or the next year, as the very day thou receiveſt? The ſacrament of baptiſm is but once adminiſtered, and that in our infancy; and yet we own that the baptiſmal vow and covenant doth bind to the day of our death, though we ſhould live an hundred years. Now, is it not the ſame covenant and vow we renew at the Lord's ſupper, which we make in baptiſm? Why, then, ſhould not the bond in this ſacrament be as binding and laſting as in the other?

O communicant, keep up always upon thy ſpirit a freſh ſenſe of thy ſacramental covenant; renew the impreſſions thereof every morning in thy ſecret retirements, and then thou wilt be in better caſe to beat off all temptations to apoſtacy through the day. Say ſtill

to temptations, tempt me not from my allegiance and fidelity: The vows of God are upon me ſealed at the ſacrament, and recorded in heaven: Not one of my fellow communicants, but will be witneſſes for God, that they ſaw me perſonally and publicly own and renew my covenant with him: Wherefore, for my oath's ſake, and thoſe that ſat with me, I will not do this evil, and ſin againſt God. Shall I alienate and pollute the heart ſo ſolemnly devoted to God? Shall I make light of my oath, turn diſloyal to my King, and falſe to my God? Shall I ever be ſo ingrate or perfidious, as forget his kindneſs to me, or my vows to him? Shall he eſcape that doth ſuch things? or, ſhall he break the covenant and be delivered?

Thou haſt great need to pray that God may fix the laſting impreſſion of thy vows upon thy heart, for it is naturally deceitful, prone to forget God and gad after the vanities of time Cry with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. cxix. 36 37. "Incline my heart unto thy teſtimonies, and not unto covetouſneſs: Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way." Let me never be ſo eager upon the world, as to forget to retire to converſe with my Saviour: Let me never ſo perplex myſelf with worldly buſineſs, as to omit to pray, to meditate, to read and ſing due praiſes to my God. No, no; I will ſay to the world and all time's things, I am not at my own diſpoſal: "I have ſworn, and will perform, that I will keep God's righteous judgments." O how deeply am I obliged to him that has paid my debt! What ſhall I render unto the Lord? Lord, though I can do nothing that is ſatisfactory, let me do ſomething gratulatory. Chriſt gave himſelf a ſin-offering for me, let me give myſelf a thank-offering to him; let me offer up myſelf a living ſacrifice to my Redeemer, who offered up himſelf a dying ſacrifice for my redemption.

DIRECT. VII. See that you crucify Sin, after you have been ſeeing Chriſt Crucified ſet forth before your Eyes in the Sacrament.

HATH ſin been ſo cruel as to put to death the Son of God? See that henceforth you have no pity upon the murderer of Chriſt your Saviour. As Saul eyed David to kill him, ſo do you eye thoſe traitors, your ſins, from this day forward to kill and deſtroy them. Never correſpond or parley with them any more; nenever entertain a favourable thought of them, nor give them a kind look again, ſeeing they have done ſo horrid and inexcuſable a deed.

O communicant, haſt thou ſeen Chriſt ſtruggling to ſatisfy juſtice for ſin, and ſave thee from it; and, will you after all chuſe wilfully to walk in ſin? Will you not burn the ſpear that pierced him, and break in pieces the nails that crucified him? Every one of Chriſt's wounds is a mouth opened to plead for your wounding and killing of ſin. Had you ſeen Chriſt wreſtling in the garden in his bloody agony, ſweating great drops of blood, lying on the ground; had you heard him utter theſe words, "Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me:" Had you ſeen his ſoul beſet on all hands by your bloody ſins, and even brought to a nonplus, John xii. 27. when he know not (to ſpeak with reverence) well what to ſay; had you ſeen him bound, led and nailed to the croſs, with a black angry cloud upon his ſoul, crying out, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" Would you not have vowed a revenge upon ſin? O could you have loved or hugged the ſoldier, or been fond of the ſpear that pierced his bleſſed ſide? Well, O communicant, this thou doſt, when thou huggeſt thy ſins, and eſpecially when thou entertaineſt thy predominant luſt or darling ſin: Your other ſins are as the nails in his hands and feet; but this as the ſpear that made a great wound in his ſide, and went nearer his heart than any of the reſt.

Oh, never ſuffer ſin to live any more in you, that would not ſuffer your Saviour to live in the world; ne-

ver allow that a room in your heart, which would not allow him a room amongſt the living on earth. O beware of crucifying Chriſt afreſh. Never diſpute any more, when a temptation is preſented, whether Chriſt or Barabbas ſhould be preferred; your luſts denied, or Chriſt crucified: But preſently cry out againſt your luſts, "Crucify them, crucify them." Have you ſeen God taking off your former burdens, and laying them upon the back of his dear Son, who willingly took them on for you, though they preſſed him down to the earth? O then, go not to lay any more loads upon him. Hath he taken you and waſhed you from your ſins in his own blood? O do not return with the ſow that is waſhed to her wallowing in the mire. Hath the Lord been graciouſly ſealing the pardon of your ſins? Go not to turn his grace into wantonneſs, by venturing to run on in a new ſcore. If you have waſhed your feet in the blood of the Lamb, O beware of defiling them again.

DIRECT. VIII. Walk always under the ſenſe of God's all-ſeeing Eye upon you in every thing you do.

A HOLY and circumſpect walk is what every communicant ſhould endeavour, eſpecially after the ſacrament; this would tend, not only to your own peace and comfort, but alſo to the glory of God, and the promoting of his intereſt and kingdom in the world. Were your lives tender, circumſpect, and ſhining in holineſs before the world, there would be little need of miracles to confirm the word, or convert infidels; for your converſations would allure ſtrangers, and mightily recommend religion unto them; ſo that they might thereby be drawn to ſeek acquaintance with the God of holy communicants, as Nebuchadnezzar was with the God of Daniel: and thus you would be inſtruments of turning many to righteouſneſs, and ſo ſhine as the ſtars for ever and ever.

Now, if you would ſhine in a holy walk and exemplary converſation, then you muſt, like Caleb, "walk after God," Num. xiv. 24. you muſt imitate him in his holineſs

holineſs and purity. Again, you muſt like Enoch, *walk with God*, Gen. v. 22. live in communion and fellowſhip with him. And then, you muſt, like Abraham, *walk before God*, Gen. xvii. 1. live and carry as thoſe who believe he hath a ſpecial eye upon you in all that you do. And when you go about any action or buſineſs, ſpiritual or temporal, ſay to your ſouls, "I have a watchful eye over me, that pierceth into all my thoughts, that diſcovers the principles from which I am acted, and the ends to which I move: Let me act then, as one that ſtill believes this, as one that muſt ſhortly be accountable to God for all I do, and I know not how ſoon." Or, ſay to this purpoſe, "Now I am going about ſuch a buſineſs, ſuch a duty; and, if Chriſt ſhall ſend for me at the end of it, what account will I be able to give of my management to him? What do I know, but at the end of this duty I may either be in Abraham's boſom, or in a gulf of miſery?"

Walk now in all your ſteps, as if you ſaw Chriſt crucified before you, breathing forth his dying love to loſt ſinners, and pouring out his blood to cleanſe them from ſin. Would not that be a great aw-band upon you, to reſtrain you from ſin? Walk now, as a damned ſoul would walk, were he again to live under the offers of mercy: How diligently (think you) would he obey, how fervently would he pray, and how peremptorily would he reject all temptations to ſin? So ought every ſincere communicant to do, that intends to pleaſe God and walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called.

DIRECT. IX. Endeavour to walk cheerfully and contentedly under every lot and condition.

YOU may look for trials and difficulties while you ſojourn in this world: But, in midſt of all, you ſhould aim to be much in the eunuch's frame after the ſeal of baptiſm, Acts viii. 39. who "went on his way rejoicing." Have you got the ſeal of God's covenant? Then, whatever your afflictions be, you cannot but have a reviving cordial, for your ſins are pardoned. Let not worthy

worthy communicants ſay they are ſick, when their iniquities are forgiven them. Should they walk dejectedly, who have got an intereſt in the new covenant ſecured, and all the promiſes and privileges of it ratified and confirmed to them? For, what do they want, but it to be had here? Whatſoever is a bleſſing is ſecured here, either ſanctified riches, or a contented poverty.

A worthy communicant may ſay, Let God do with me as he will in this world, I deſire to be content, ſeeing he hath engaged himſelf to be with me in all ſtates and conditions, and to order all things for my advantage: Surely "he cannot lie, he cannot deny himſelf;" all his words are oaths for their certainty, and all his promiſes "the ſure mercies of David." Let my covenanted God chuſe out my lot for me, ſurely it ſhall be with more wiſdom and with more affection than I can chuſe for myſelf. He whom Almighty wiſdom and goodneſs takes a fatherly care of, and hath engaged to feed, cannot but have enough. If Chriſt be mine, all things are mine; nothing is excluded, where he is included.

DIRECT. X. Delight in the company of the People of God.

SHAKE off all ungodly ſociety, and have your hearts linked to all thoſe that bear Chriſt's image. Set the Pſalmiſt's example before your eyes in this matter, Pſal. cxix. 115 "Depart from me, ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God" And verſe 63. "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts. It is a true ſaying of Solomon's, Prov. xiii. 20. "He that walketh with wiſe men, ſhall be wiſe; but a companion of fools ſhall be deſtroyed." Make the livelieſt of God's people your greateſt intimates, and upon all occaſions improve their fellowſhip to the beſt advantage. Beware of the cooling of your affections to the people of God; but let that divine ſentence ſtill run in your minds, 1 John iv. 11. "Beloved, if God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another." Let the love of God, manifeſted to you at the

the ſacrament engage you to carry lovingly and affectionately to all his people. Henceforth behave yourſelves as ſervants of the ſame family, branches of the ſame vine, members of the ſame body, and children of the ſame Father.

DIRECT. XI. Study to ſhine in the graces of Meekneſs, Patience, and Forgiveneſs of Injuries.

THIS is the way to make you like your glorious Redeemer and Pattern; and this is the way to adorn the profeſſion of religion, and to make it amiable in the eyes of ſtrangers. And ſurely all thoſe who have been ſharers of God's infinite mercy and goodneſs in the ſacrament, will come away from it with a diſpoſition to bear injuries, and a readineſs to forgive thoſe that do them wrong.

DIRECT. XII. Labour to keep up conſtant longings for Communion-Occaſions here below, and for the eternal Supper of the Lamb above.

SURELY thoſe who have met with Chriſt in this ordinance will be breathing for further diſcoveries of his ſweetneſs and beauty. You ought to be ſaying, like Moſes, when he came down from the mount, "I beſeech thee, Lord, ſhew me thy glory:" Let me have new manifeſtations of thy excellency, freſh intimations of thy love, and clearer diſcoveries of thy will. Oh, when will the opportunity return? When ſhall I come and appear before God? When ſhall I again ſee his power and glory in the ſanctuary? When ſhall I taſte his love and goodneſs again in the ſacrament? When ſhall I again behold his well covered table, ſit down thereat with his children, and be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs?

But ſeeing this lower table is tranſient and uncertain, look for one to come which is fixed and abiding. "Yet a little while, (ſaith Chriſt) and I will ſee you again, and I will come and receive you to myſelf." O believer,

your

your lovely bridegroom will keep his word and his day, he will come and marry you to himſelf for ever: Therefore ever ſtand upon the watch-tower, wiſhfully looking for his appearance; never ſlack thy watch, nor let thy expectation cool, till he come and take thee home to himſelf, and ſet you down at the higher table, where he ſhall for ever lay aſide his vail, and his amiable countenance never more be clouded with frowns; where you ſhall not have a ſacramental but a beatifical viſion; where you ſhall not remember him, but behold him as he is; where you ſhall feed on him without ſigns, and ſee him without a vail; where all your ſorrows ſhall be turned into joys, where, for every reproach you met with in God's ſervice, you ſhall reap eternal honour; for every hour of ſorrow, you ſhall enjoy endleſs ages of comfort. "Make haſte, my beloved, let the day break and the ſhadows fly away. Even ſo, Lord Jeſus, come quickly." Take me to that place where myſteries ſhall be turned into revelations, faith into viſion, hope into fruition, eſpouſals into embraces, ſorrowful ſighs into nuptial ſongs, drops of tears into rivers of pleaſures, tranſient glances into the radiant and direct beams of the ſun of righteouſneſs, ſhort taſtes into everlaſting feaſting and fulneſs. How ſmall are the comforts of the lower table, if compared with theſe of the higher table? How dark are the diſcoveries believers have here, if compared with theſe bright manifeſtations above? But, becauſe I have inſiſted on this head formerly, I ſhall add no more here upon it; but wiſh that we may come at length experimentally to know the difference, to our everlaſting comfort.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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